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ABSTRACT

This report describes a study which examined trends and future prospects in the placement and provision of services to children with special education needs (SEN) in Scotland, United Kingdom, in the context of recent policy changes toward increased integration, increased parental choice, and devolved school management. The study involved interviews with officers in 12 local education authorities and case studies of 32 pupils with a range of SEN in 8 mainstream and 8 special schools in 2 education authorities. The report addresses the following aspects of the study: (1) an introductory overview; (2) the nature of educational services in mainstream and special schools; (3) perceptions of the impact of policy changes on patterns of services; (4) placements of students with SEN; (5) costs of SEN services in mainstream and special schools; (6) factors influencing the placement of children with SEN; (7) achievement of pupils in mainstream and special settings; (8) training needs of teachers and other staff; (9) services for students with SEN; and (10) implications of the findings. Specific recommendations are offered to the Scottish Office Education Department, local education authorities, and schools. Appendices include interview schedules, a description of the education authorities involved, raw statistical data, and profiles of the case study pupils. (Contains 57 references.) (DB)

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SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS PROVISION IN MAINSTREAM AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN SCOTLAND

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SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS PROVISION IN MAINSTREAM AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN SCOTLAND

Final Report to the
Scottish Office Education Department

November 1995

Julie Allan
Sally Brown
Sheila Riddell

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Preface

This research took place between September 1992 and March 1995 and was funded by the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department. It was concerned with current trends in the placement of and provision for pupils with special educational needs; with how things had changed over recent years; and with the prospects of change for the future. This last task was particularly onerous in two respects. First, it required considerable vision from those in the field (policy makers, teachers and others) as they looked ahead to what seemed an increasingly uncertain scenario. Second, our work was progressing amid multiple policy changes. This made for an interesting time, but the pace of change made reporting difficult. We hope that we have conveyed accurately a sense of the changing context of SEN provision and we should like to thank those who kept us informed of the changes and of their responses to them.

This report contains much about the policy changes which were thought likely to have an impact on special education. Before long, DSM, single tier authorities and the like will become part of reality and this document will take on an historical dimension. It is perhaps worth noting the time scale of change to which we refer. Interviews with officers in all twelve education authorities had taken place in the early part of 1993, we conducted case studies in two authorities during the academic year 1993/94. At the time of the interviews, the 5-14 programme was being implemented, with the expectation that all pupils would be included. The materials *Support for learning: special educational needs within the 5-14 curriculum* appeared first in the summer of 1993, then at the end of 1994. Parental choice had been reinforced by the introduction of *The parents charter*, directed at all parents, including those whose children with special educational needs. Devolved school management, however, was still a novel concept and when we interviewed officers, the official guidelines for schemes, and the authorities' response to them, had yet to be disclosed. The scope of local government reform was, at the time, unknown: the Local Government etc (Scotland) Bill was published in December 1993. We wish to thank officers in those authorities for welcoming us during this difficult period and sharing their future plans with us.

A large part of the research involved working in mainstream and special schools alongside pupils with a range of special needs. This was an exciting and revelatory time for us and we thank the pupils and their parents warmly for their open and enthusiastic participation. We thank also the staff in the schools who welcomed us and gave up their time to talk. Finally, our thanks go to the members of our project

advisory committee, chaired by Dr Jenny Barr, for their constructive criticism and advice and to Louise McKinsley, who helped to produce the report.

Project Advisory Committee

Dr Jenny Barr (Chair)	Central Regional Psychological Service
Ms Marianna Buultjenns	Moray House Institute of Education
Ms Alison Closs	Moray House Institute of Education
Ms Judith Duncan	Scottish Office Education Department
Professor James Hogg	The White Top Centre
Ms Anne Kindlyesides	Department of Education, Fife Regional Council
Mr Alan Lindsey	Scottish Office Education Department
HMI Mr Alistair Marquis	Scottish Office Education Department
Professor Pamela Munn	Moray House Institute of Education
Ms Maggie Pollard	Richmond Park School
Ms Liz Sutherland	Consultant

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INTRODUCTION

In 1992, researchers at the Department of Education, University of Stirling were commissioned by the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department to undertake a study of the effectiveness of mainstream and special school provision for pupils with special educational needs. Official documents, such as the Warnock report have advocated the integration of pupils with SEN where possible, but a clearer picture was needed of where pupils with SEN are being placed and about their academic and social experiences within different settings. If more pupils are being integrated, there are obvious implications for both mainstream and special schools, which may be undergoing significant change. Their capacity to make effective provision for a changing population is likely to be influenced further by the changing policy context within education authorities in Scotland.

The research aims and design are described in the final part of this chapter. We begin, however, by outlining the broad messages from the statistics on the placement patterns of children with special educational needs within Scotland (reported more fully in Chapter 4), then consider some aspects of the policy context, especially in so far as it relates to integration.

Broad messages from the statistics on placement patterns

Statistics on children with special educational needs were provided by the Scottish Office Education Department and enabled us to examine current patterns of placement in Scotland as a whole, across education authorities and over time. It is important, however, to be cautious when interpreting statistics and to bear two things in mind:

- Figures for mainstream placements do not include children in special units, special classes or learning centre. For statistical purposes these count as placements in special
- The pattern of recording across Scotland is variable. The statistics distinguish between children with SEN with and without a Record of Need in special, but only the former are included in the figures for mainstream. Regions with low levels of recording might appear to integrate fewer children than other regions which record higher proportions of children, since only the proportion of recorded pupils is accounted for.

Overall, the numbers of pupils with Records of Needs within mainstream schools have increased since 1983, the first year for which figures were available, with the rise in

primary schools slightly greater than in secondary. A corresponding decrease in numbers in special schools might have been expected. This, however, was not the case and the special school population has remained relatively stable over the same period. The greatest change has been in the numbers of pupils being **recorded**. In 1993, there were 11,465 pupils with Records of Needs in Scotland (in EA, grant maintained and independent schools) and the figures have been increasing by around 1,000 annually. Recording levels vary across the regions and in 1993 ranged from 0.7% to 2.2%. This apparent anomaly, in which the integration movement has led to an increase in the number of children receiving special education (because of more children identified as in need of it), has been observed in other parts of Europe (eg by Kinvirauma and Kiniven, 1988; Reindal, 1995).

What has this meant for mainstream and special schools? The statistics show that both have experienced a **changing pupil population** between 1985 and 1995:

- mainstream schools have received more pupils with special educational needs
- mainstream schools have received pupils with more severe and multiple SEN (including, for example, pupils with Down's syndrome who might previously have attended special schools)
- special schools have received pupils with more severe or multiple SEN (including pupils who previously might have attended hospital or residential special schools or who might not have survived to school age)
- special schools have received pupils with a broader range of special needs (from pupils with severe and multiple SEN to those with only mild/moderate learning difficulties, for whom a special rather than a mainstream school placement has been considered appropriate by parents or the education authority)
- special schools have received more pupils with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties, sometimes combined with cognitive difficulties.

The pattern of placement of pupils with special educational needs is clearly a complex one and has not simply involved a shift of pupils from special into mainstream schools. The statistics are discussed more fully in Chapter 4, but here we examine the policy context in which these changes have occurred and which provide the agenda for uncertainty in the years ahead.

The current status of policy on integration

The Warnock Report (DES, 1978) indicated that education in mainstream schools should be regarded as the preferable option for children with special educational needs. However, it was also recognised that special schools would continue to fulfil:

> an important function in offering separate special educational provision for certain groups of children with special needs (para 8.9: 123).

The 1981 Education Act for England and Wales placed a statutory obligation on local authorities to educate children with special educational needs in mainstream schools, as long as this was commensurate with the effective use of resources and the interests of other pupils. The Scottish legislation was more circumspect, avoiding explicit references to integration on the assumption that parents would use the parental choice legislation, which formed part of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (as amended), to exercise their preferences with regard to school placement.

It is evident that in much of the Western world, integration of children with special needs has been promoted as the appropriate direction for future policy developments. In the United States, the 1975 Integration for All Handicapped Children Act (PL94-142) required states and local school districts, among other things, to ensure that handicapped students were placed in the 'least restrictive environment'. This terminology allowed for the use of segregated provision in some instances, whilst maintaining that, if at all possible, children should be in mainstream schools. Its greater flexibility has encouraged some authorities in Scotland to adopt it in preference to the term 'integration' (see Chapter 2).

The European Community has recently endorsed the policy of integration (O'Hanlon, 1993). Although the major concern of the EC is with economic matters, it has a policy-making role in relation to the social conditions of member states and 7% of its budget is spent on matters relating to social policy. (The United Kingdom Government has indicated its unease with this social policy function and has not signed the social chapter of the Maastricht Treaty; nonetheless, European social policy frequently has an impact on domestic policy in the UK as in other member states).

Youth policy, as an element of social policy, has been pursued particularly vigorously and in 1987 the Council of Ministers approved a number of proposals for a programme of European collaboration on the integration of 'handicapped' children. The first of these reaffirmed the importance of achieving the maximum possible integration of handicapped children into mainstream schools and envisaged that essential measures to

achieve these goals would include elimination of physical obstacles, training of teachers, development of school curricula and fostering of understanding among families and the local community. In 1990, the Council of Ministers reaffirmed its commitment to integration on the understanding that this was the direction in which the policies of all member states were evolving.

At European and UK levels, then, there would appear to be a considerable head of steam pushing forward the policy of placing children with special educational needs in mainstream schools. However, this apparent consensus masks the existence of uncertainty concerning the meaning of integration in different national contexts, what counts as successful integration for different pupils and, at a more fundamental level, the ethical and political reasons for favouring one form of provision for children with special educational needs over another. Some positions which have been taken up in this debate are summarised briefly below.

Arguments for integration

It is maintained by some that education alongside peers in the mainstream represents a basic human right for all children. This reflects a recognition that, across culture and time, people with disabilities have been disadvantaged by being segregated. Indeed in some cases this has arisen from a perception of disabled people as deviants who might threaten social stability. Wolfensberger (1972) commented:

> When we review society's efforts to handle deviancy, we can readily classify these efforts into four categories: destruction of deviant individuals, their segregation, reversal of their condition, or prevention thereof. In the past, some kinds of deviance were seen to be the work of the devil or other malignant forces. As such, the deviant person was seen as evil too, and was persecuted and destroyed in order to protect society. . . As a more humane alternative to destruction, the deviant person who is perceived as being unpleasant, offensive or frightening can be segregated from the mainstream of society and placed at its periphery. . . Deviance can be seen to be someone's fault or perhaps a sign that the deviant person's parents had sinned and were therefore being punished by the Lord. The belief that blemished offspring is a punishment for parental wrongdoing appears to be deeply ingrained in the unconscious of the people. Often, this belief is overtly expressed (p24).

Motivated by a desire to challenge these dehumanising processes, a number of organisations in different countries campaign for the integration of all children with special educational needs. In the United Kingdom, for instance, the Centre for Studies in Integration in Education offers the following reasons for supporting mainstream placement of pupils with special educational needs:

HUMAN RIGHTS:
1. All children have the right to learn together.
2. Children should not be devalued or discriminated against by being excluded and sent away because of their disability or learning difficulty.
3. Children do not need to be protected from each other.
4. There are no legitimate reasons to separate children from each other for their education.
GOOD EDUCATION
5. Research shows children do better, academically and socially, in integrated settings.
6. There is no teaching or care in a segregated school which cannot take place in an ordinary school.
7. Given commitment and support, integration is a more efficient use of resources.
GOOD SOCIAL SENSE
8. Segregation teaches children to be fearful, ignorant and breeds prejudice.
9. All children need a mainstream education that will help them develop relationships and prepare them for life.
10. Only integration has the potential to reduce fear and promote friendship, respect, understanding and co-operation.
(undated publicity poster, CSIE)

In summary, according to CSIE, 'Integration is a human right, it's good education and makes good social sense'. Special education, on the other hand, is equated by the Centre with exclusion and devaluation and no circumstances are envisaged when this could be to the child's advantage. The British Council of Organisations for Disabled People has also campaigned for a firm commitment to integration for all children with special educational needs, since this is regarded as an essential precursor to independent adult status (BCODP, 1986).

In the United States the Regular Education Initiative (REI) maintains that:

> Regular education ought to take full responsibility for handicapped students and that special education should serve as a resource for regular education (Pijl and Meijer, 1991, 105).

The concept of 'inclusive education' has been strongly promoted in Canada. Implicit in Canadian educators' use of this terminology is the recognition that integration places the onus on children with special educational needs to fit into mainstream education and submit to a process of normalisation. Inclusive education, on the other hand, recognises and celebrates diversity. To illustrate its usage, Corbett (1994), quotes the following extract from the Summer 1992 edition of *Inclusion News*, the journal of the Centre for Integrated Education and Community in Toronto:

> Inclusion means inclusion! It means affiliation, combination. . Inclusion does not mean we are all the same. Inclusion does not mean we all agree. Rather, inclusion celebrates our diversity with respect and gratitude. . .Inclusion is an antidote to racism and

> sexism because it welcomes these differences and celebrates them as capacities rather than deficiencies (p1).

Some researchers such as Booth (1988) and Barnes (1991) have allied themselves explicitly with campaigns to promote integration and have undertaken research to monitor the implementation of national policy. Booth (1992) has documented the efforts of mainstream schools to create an ethos accepting of children with severe learning difficulties who have been regarded traditionally as difficult to integrate. For Booth, integration is 'essentially a political process, it is about the transfer of power' (1988: 119). He argues for a concept of integration which:

> prompts ourselves and others to challenge the social relations and curricula of schools, and to link these to the way inequalities are maintained, reproduced and countered. It is concerned with redefining normality to include diversity and with supporting people to define their aspirations and opportunities for themselves (1988: 119).

Doubts about the policy of integration

Despite official endorsements of the policy of integration, a number of commentators have expressed reservations about its meaning and implications and some of these arguments are summarised below.

Positive arguments for separate special provision

Parents of children with special educational needs and education professionals recognise positive features of the so-called segregation of special provision, such as small classes or a more protective and secure environment, which are valued over and above integration. Indeed, as Mittler has argued, the goal of integration has sometimes been pursued with undue fervour, taking on 'the language of a religious revival' (1985: 9). Mittler's concern is that this value position detracts from a 'commitment to better education for handicapped children in ordinary schools' (1985: 9). For him, the prime concern should be obtaining an adequate match between the needs of the child and the provision which the local authority is able to finance. The commitment by some education authorities to education in the 'least restrictive environment' rather than to integration for all suggests that local policy makers may share Mittler's reservation.

Political and ethical reservations

Further warnings concerning the uncritical pursuit of integration at all costs have been raised by Barton and Tomlinson (1984) and Soder (1984 and 1989). These writers are not opposed to integration per se. However, they fear that simply espousing this policy is not enough to guarantee worthwhile education for children with special needs in a

society in which, they argue, inequality is endemic. Soder suggests that moves towards integration are often underpinned by a belief that all disabilities are relative and the problem is simply one of negative labelling. This may have the effect, he maintains, of obscuring the discrimination which disabled people may experience and their need for additional support. Such criticisms have been levelled at Strathclyde Region's policy statement on special educational needs, entitled *Every Child is Special* (Strathclyde Regional Council, 1992). The question posed is that if every child is special, how are decisions to be made about who deserves additional resources? (Jackson, 1993). Doubts raised by writers like Soder might be refuted if it were possible to demonstrate that integration was generally successful. However, as Pijl and Meijer (1991) pointed out, such evidence is lacking because little research has been done in this area:

> Very few studies address questions on, for instance, the social integration of certain groups of handicapped students: it is unknown whether they talk, play, work together with non-handicapped peers, attend birthday parties, or have friendships in and outside the classroom. That lack of knowledge is remarkable, because the education of handicapped students is strongly promoted and accepted as a valuable goal (p101).

Uncertainty over the meaning of integration

One possible reason for the absence of research which assesses the conditions under which integration is likely to be successful is that there is uncertainty over the criteria which should be used in making such judgements. Warnock (DES, 1978) recognised three forms of integration: **locational integration** which is achieved when pupils with special needs are taught on the same site as their mainstream peers; **social integration** which implies that the pupils interact with others for activities such as mealtimes, assemblies and breaks, but not necessarily for academic parts of the school day; and **functional integration**, the most difficult to achieve, which involves pupils pursuing similar curricular goals alongside their mainstream peers. Given that there is a vast difference between merely attending the same school and being taught in the same way as other students, Hegarty, Pocklington and Lucas (1981) argued that it was important to be precise about exactly what level of integration was intended for an individual student. Allan (1994) has illustrated some of the confusions which may arise when different professionals lack this shared understanding. In one of the case studies of integration conducted as part of an OECD project, she found that the class teacher and learning support teacher judged that integration was failing for a particular child because in their view functional integration had not been achieved. Senior management and external professionals, however, were more positive because this level of integration had never been intended. Clearly, assessments of the effectiveness

of integrated placements are not helpful unless they are based on a common understanding of intended outcomes and for these purposes a more precise terminology is required.

Variation in the practice of integration at national and regional levels

Commitment to integration may be a common theme in western states but variation across national boundaries and between regions in the same country are apparent. Pijl and Meijer (1991) compared the practice of integration in eight countries and they summarise their findings in table 1.1. It is not clear what is meant by curricularly integrated and the value of the fourth column, obtained by adding columns B and C is questionable, since there may be a variety of reasons why pupils are not integrated. Nevertheless the table does provide an interesting illustration of patterns of integration across Europe.

Table 1.1: Summary of Data Concerning Students with Special Needs in 8 Countries

Country	A Curricularly Integrated	B Socially Integrated	C Segregated	B + C Hard to integrate Curricularly
Italy T = 1.7	0.2	1.3	0.2	1.5
Denmark T = 13.3	10.9	0.5	1.9	2.4
Sweden T = 3.0	1.0	1.3	0.7	2.0
USA T = 8.8	5.0	2.3	1.5	3.8
W Germany T = 4.2	0	0	4.2	4.2
England T = 1.8	0.3	0.1	1.4	1.5
Belgium T = 3.6	0.1	0	3.5	3.5
Holland T = 4.1	0.2	0	3.9	3.9

T = total percentage of recognised students with special needs
Columns A-D give percentage of school population

The authors suggested that caution should be exercised in drawing comparisons between countries because special educational needs are likely to be construed differently and the quality of statistics is variable. Their data were drawn from a comparative study conducted by a research team of the Institute for Educational Research (RION) of the University of Groningen, which undertook an extensive literature review, analysed official statistics and interviewed key policy makers in each country. They found wide variation in the proportion of the age group identified officially as having special educational needs (ranging from 1.7% in Italy to 13.3% in Denmark), but a broad agreement across countries (apart from in England and Italy) that at least 2% of children are difficult to integrate into the full curriculum. They concluded that there were clear systemic differences in the way in which countries dealt with special needs students and identified three main categories:

> * The first group consists of the so-called two-track countries: Belgium, West Germany and the Netherlands. These countries clearly segregate a group of special needs students and realize curricular integration for the remaining students. The school-systems work separately and independently. The policy of these countries is two-track oriented.
> * The second group consists of countries that lay much emphasis on one-track regular education. Sweden and Italy seem to be representatives of this policy of low registration and high efforts to avoid segregation.
> * The third group offers a flexible system to special needs students. A high number of students are registered in these countries. There is a pragmatic need for doing so: the registration means financial support either in separate or integrated settings (p109).

Pijl and Meijer suggested that the Warnock Report attempted to establish the United Kingdom as a one-track system, with low official registration of special needs students and no sub-classification of this group. However, they argued that recent educational reforms might be influencing a trend towards a two-track system.

Earlier studies in England (Goacher et al, 1988) and in Scotland (Riddell et al, 1992) have found variation among education authorities in England and Wales and in Scotland both in levels of recording and use of mainstream placements. To some extent, these differences may be explained by variations in clearly enunciated regional policy. For example, the London borough of Newham has made a firm commitment to inclusive education and has begun the process of closing its special schools (Corbett, 1994). However, other factors also appear to be involved, such as population distributions, the existence of substantial numbers of special schools and the specific professional beliefs of individuals. In this report, we analyse the current use of mainstream and special

school placements and use key informant accounts to understand the influences on policy development.

Factors affecting the context of policy on integration

Given the rapid changes in general educational policy over the past decade and a half, a concern of this study is to consider the effect of these changes on policy for special educational needs, especially integration. Some particularly significant elements are considered below.

Parental choice

A central theme of government policy has been:

> an emphasis on choice, wherever possible between competing providers, as the best spur to quality improvement (Foreword, Parents' Charter in Scotland, Scottish Office, 1991).

With reference to the rights of parents of children with special educational needs, the document states:

> You have the right to an education for your child which meets his or her requirements

and:

> Parents of a child with a Record of Needs have the same right to make a placing request as other parents. In addition, they may nominate an independent or grant-aided special school (p10).

There are two points which need to be made here. The first is that the exercise of choice may not be as straightforward as the Parents' Charter suggests and may bring parents and regional authorities into direct conflict. This is illustrated by the case of parents who wished their dyslexic son to attend an independent school specialising in the education of children with such difficulties. The request was initially refused by the local authority on the grounds that its assessment indicated that the child's needs could be met in mainstream (TESS, 14 January 1994). The parents' appeal was upheld by the sheriff under the terms of section 28 of the 1980 Education Act, which underlines the general principle that children should be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents. The case illustrates the likelihood of tension between parents seeking to exercise choice and education authorities endeavouring to implement regional policies whilst making efficient use of available resources. Interestingly, the updated version of the Parents' Charter is more cautions and tells parents that they can 'ask for' (rather

than nominate) a grant-aided or independent school for their child (Scottish Office, 1995).

The second point is that to date little is known about the way in which parents of children with special educational needs exercise choice with regard to school placement. The aim of the first part of this research was to investigate how key informants (within local authorities) evaluated the way in which the policy was operating; the second phase compared these views with parents' own accounts.

Devolved school management

The delegation of financial resources to schools, which formed part of the 1988 Education Reform Act for England and Wales, was scheduled to be fully operational in Scotland in 1996, although some authorities already had schemes in operation. Experience south of the Border (Audit Commission, 1992a and b; Lee, 1992; Lunt and Evans, 1994) indicated that problems with regard to the identification and placement of children with special educational needs might be exacerbated by local management of schools (LMS). Lunt and Evans (1994) suggest that the slow move towards integration documented by Swann (1991) might be impeded by LMS. Theoretically, it should be possible to ensure that additional resources follow a child with special educational needs placed in a mainstream school. However, the Audit Commission has documented the difficulties experienced by authorities in transferring resources from special to mainstream schools. To secure significant additional funding, it is necessary for a child to have their difficulties recognised by an official statement and, Lunt and Evans argued, parents may decide to opt for a special school placement where additional resourcing is already in place, rather than a mainstream school placement where additional provision may, despite the protection of a statement, be much more difficult to secure.

A further potential problem in the delegation of resources concerns the provision of support for children who have learning difficulties but are not officially recorded. Under devolved school management, 20% of funds are retained centrally and used to provide a range of services including general support for children with learning difficulties. It is currently uncertain whether this centrally controlled fund will be adequate and in future schools will undoubtedly have to explore new ways of meeting the highly specific needs of some of their pupils. Evans and colleagues (1994) have investigated whether school clusters might be able to take over some of the functions of education authorities in this respect, although they are not overly optimistic of the chances of success. Experience south of the Border indicates that the overall impact of LMS may be to increase pressure for a statement of needs to obtain earmarked

resources, and that once a statement is opened there is a greater likelihood of placement in a special school. Our initial interviews with local policy-makers invited speculation on the future impact of devolved school management and ways in which schools might adapt to changes in service provision. The accounts of case studies of two authorities already involved in devolved school management (see Chapter 5) provide concrete examples of the effects of the policy in its early stages.

School accountability

Regulations issued by the SOED in 1992 established that all schools should publish their public examination results, post-school destinations of pupils, levels of attendance, truancy and per capita costs (SOED, 1992a). Pressure on schools to compete with each other could result in those pupils who are potentially low achievers or likely to display behaviour detrimental to their own or others' learning being more likely to be excluded from mainstream schools. South of the border, Armstrong and Galloway (1994) have demonstrated that children previously considered disruptive have been redefined as disturbed. This redefinition allows mainstream teachers and schools to justify their exclusion on the grounds that the problem lies within the child rather than the system, and that outside expertise is required to take responsibility.

Swann (1991) has suggested that the increase in the proportion of primary age pupils being placed in special schools (also evident in Scotland - see Chapter 4) may be attributed to the pressure imposed by the increased emphasis on school level performance indicators. There are, however, other aspects of school accountability that could resist this trend. Under the new Scottish Office regulations, all schools are obliged to publish their special educational needs policies; this is likely to focus attention on an area which may have been neglected in some institutions. One of the aims of interviews with key informants was to extend our understanding of whether these new obligations were perceived as having a major impact.

The 5-14 programme

Scottish Office guidelines on the 5-14 programme (SOED, 1989) have emphasised that access to a common curriculum should be regarded as the entitlement of all pupils. This has the considerable strength of requiring that any deviation from that for the individual child has to be justified. However, it is evident that the teaching and assessment of pupils who are thought unlikely to attain level A may pose particular problems. There are dangers that such pupils might be labelled as failures at an early age and perhaps excluded from mainstream school on the grounds of the need for a special curriculum. On the other hand, the programme requires both mainstream and special school teachers to recognise the entitlement of all pupils to a curriculum offering

breadth, depth and progression and to explore new ways of facilitating access to such programmes. National assessment is perhaps particularly problematic for children with special educational needs. At one level, it has been argued that the progress of all children should be officially assessed and reported to parents within a nationally agreed framework. The SOED, however, in its review of national testing arrangements, decided that pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language would not be assessed until they had attained level A on the grounds that this was a group:

> for whom testing was widely seen to offer few benefits and for whom tests were difficult to construct and time-consuming to administer (SOED, 1992b, para 20.3).

Given this uncertainty, we felt it was important to explore perceptions of policy-makers (and, in the second phase of the study, teachers and parents) on the impact of the 5-14 programme on placement decisions and pupils' experiences of the curriculum in mainstream and special schools.

Single tier authorities

The restructuring of education authorities in 1996 from 12 regional and island to 32 unitary authorities is likely to have an impact on services for children with special educational needs. Coupled with the implementation of devolved school management, there is a possibility that smaller authorities will be unable to retain certain forms of specialised provision such as special schools or units or additional support for children with learning difficulties in mainstream classes (eg peripatetic services for the visually impaired). Perhaps the greatest concern, however, is that it is likely to be much more difficult for these authorities to support new developments in provision for SEN or the further professional development of teachers. At the time of the interviews, the respondents could not be sure what these effects were likely to be, but we were interested in their speculations on the future.

The aims of the research

The aims of the research were to assess trends in the placement of children with significant special educational needs, to identify the implications for special schools of catering for fewer children with more complex special educational needs and to assess the capacity of mainstream schools to meet the academic and social needs of children with significant learning difficulties.

The research questions which guided the investigation were as follows:

1. What is the current pattern with regard to the placement of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools?
2. What are the relative financial costs of mainstream and special school provision in the context of devolved school management?
3. How effective are mainstream and special schools in meeting the academic and social needs of children with a range of learning difficulties?
4. How effective are learning support and mainstream teachers in delivering the curriculum to children with significant special educational needs? What are their training needs likely to be?
5. How effective are special school teachers likely to be in meeting the needs of children with more complex difficulties? What are their training needs likely to be?
6. What are the views of parents on the relative merits of mainstream and special school provision?

The report attempts to address these research questions at five levels:

- national policies and placement patterns
- regional policies and placement patterns
- policy and provision within two education authorities
- practice within mainstream and special schools
- the experiences of individual pupils and their parents

In the final chapter we consider the extent to which we have been able to respond to the research questions in their original form.

Research design

The research began with a broad policy focus, in which we examined statistics on placement patterns and official policy documents. In an effort to understand these patterns more fully, we explored how those responsible for the implementation of policy made sense of them. From there, we adopted a case study approach within two education authorities; in sixteen schools (eight mainstream and eight special); and of thirty two pupils with a range of special educational needs.

Our approach to collecting and analysing these data is outlined below, beginning with the interviews with officers in the twelve education authorities

Education authority officers

We were interested in the extent to which education authority personnel perceived provision for children with special educational needs (particularly those with Records of Needs) within their region as changing and what they saw as the implications for mainstream and special schools. Interviews were held with those individuals who had most involvement in SEN policy formulation and implementation in each regional (and for one region also the divisional) education authority in Scotland. In most cases this included a member of the directorate with responsibility for special educational needs, the principal educational psychologist and the adviser for special educational needs. In one large region, the sample comprised individuals from the directorate and the regional advisory service as well as an education officer from each of the divisions. We were requested not to interview members of that region's psychological service, which was under review at the time. A total of thirty seven interviews was carried out (see table 1.2).

Table 1.2: Interviews with Education Authority Personnel

Personnel	Numbers interviewed
Directorate Officials	18*
Principal Educational Psychologists	11
Advisers (SEN)	8†
Total	**37**

* includes 6 divisional education officers
† two posts of advisers were vacant at the time of the interviews and there were no advisers with responsibility for SEN in two of the Island authorities.

Each interview lasted approximately one hour, and the responses were tape recorded (interview schedules are contained in Appendix A). In the interviews, respondents were asked to consider questions in three contexts:

- the current situation
- changes over the last five to ten years
- the years ahead.

Respondents were contacted by letter, in which the main focus of the research was outlined. Members of the directorate were also sent a short paper summarising different approaches to the funding of SEN provision, with an invitation to comment on these. Everyone was asked to provide both an indication of the region's stance and a

personal viewpoint on certain matters. In the interviews attention was drawn to the following pieces of information, already in the public domain:

- the proportion of children with a Record of Needs placed in mainstream schools in the respondent's region (from the Scottish Office Statistical Bulletin)
- a statement of the respondent's regional policy on special educational needs
- responses by education authorities in England and Wales to reductions in the number of children in special schools (reported by the Audit Commission, 1992a)
- the SCCC's (1992) exhortation to teachers to accept Warnock's notion of a continuum of pupil needs, rather than categorising children according to their difficulties.

These were used to focus attention on particular aspects of SEN provision. To try to minimise the possibility of misunderstanding, we made it clear that we were following the SOED's interpretation of special units, bases, classes or learning centres as included in the statistics for special schools. Analysis of the interview data was carried out in four stages:

- summarising responses within the general framework of the six research questions
- eliciting categories from the summaries
- analysing each interview within the new framework of categories
- examining patterns across regions and across the three groups of officers.

Case studies were carried out at three levels:

- two education authorities
- sixteen schools (mainstream and special)
- thirty two children with Records of Needs.

Provision in two education authorities

Case studies of the two education authorities focused on:

- the development of policy
- the role of parents in policy development

- the use and function of Records of Needs
- the nature of funding of provision for pupils with special educational needs and the impact of devolved management schemes on SEN policy
- the training needs of staff in mainstream and special schools.

Interviews were held with a range of local authority officers and elected regional council members and we were given access to a range of policy documents. Key personnel were identified as having knowledge of particular areas (eg DSM) and helped us to pursue these in depth.

Schools

We selected two primary, two secondary and four special schools from the two education authorities. The schools were selected to provide a range of settings and types of SEN provision (see table 1.3).

Table 1.3: Sample of Mainstream and Special Schools

Type of School	Location	Size of SEN Pop'n	SEN Provision
Special	Rural	63	Range of difficulties (mainly primary)
Special	Urban	70	Wide range, including SEBD
Special	Rural	96	Wide range, including severe and complex difficulties
Special	Urban	50	Hearing impairment
Special	Urban	134	Mainly MLD, but wide range, including SEBD
Special	Urban	25	Severe and complex difficulties (post 16)
Special	Urban	7	Language and communication disorders
Special	Urban	188	Wide range, including severe and complex difficulties
Primary + special unit	Rural	12 (*202)	Mainly MLD but also physical difficulties and SEBD
Primary	Urban	3 (535)	Physical difficulties and hearing impairment
Primary	Urban	3 (284)	MLD and physical difficulties
Primary	Rural	3 (266)	Moderate, severe and complex
Secondary + special unit	Rural	13 (1115)	Mainly MLD
Secondary	Urban	4 (1016)	Mainly MLD
Secondary + special unit	Urban	20 (1011)	Visual impairment
Secondary	Urban	18 (1100)	Mainly MLD

* Mainstream school roll is given in brackets.

These schools provided the context for the case studies of individual pupils.

Pupils

The sample of thirty two pupils covered a range of special educational needs and individuals were identified with the help of staff in each school. The proportions of pupils with particular kinds of difficulties reflected, roughly speaking, the population of recorded pupils. Table 1.4 lists the main area of difficulty, although several pupils had multiple difficulties.

Table 1.4: Sample of Pupils

Difficulty	Primary Mainstream	Secondary Mainstream	Primary Special	Secondary Special
Moderate learning difficulties	2	3	1	-
Down's syndrome	1	-		3
Severe learning difficulties	-	1	-	1
Profound learning difficulties	-	-	1	1
Social/emotional/ behavioural difficulties	1	-	1	1
Physical difficulties	4	-	-	1
Hearing impairment	-	1	1	1
Visual Impairment	-	2	-	-
Specific learning difficulties	-	1		1
Communication/ language difficulties	-	-	2	1

In each school we shadowed two pupils with Records of Needs over a period of four days. Interviews were held with parents, teachers and other professionals in closest contact with the pupils being shadowed and we talked to the pupils about their experiences. We also examined Records of Needs and other information held by the school.

Analysis of pupil data

We attempted to document the academic and social experiences of each child, from the interviews with parents and staff, our observation and documentary evidence on the child. Each interview was analysed using the same framework, which included the nature of the difficulties and their identification, the child's school career, salient goals for the child, support and more general school factors. In addition, we wrote a portrait of the child's experiences from our observation of and discussion with them. For each pupil, we were able to look across the data and obtain a range of perspectives (eg from

teachers and parents) and these were summarised. We then began to connect pairs of children with similar kinds of special educational needs, but in different settings. For the final stage of the analysis we focused on twelve pairs of children and examined two aspects of their experiences:

- factors influencing the placement of individual pupils
- achievement.

These form the substance of Chapters 6 and 7 of the report.

Summary

A commitment to integration has become part of official policy in the area of special needs at international, national and local levels. However, it is evident that integration may be interpreted very differently and enjoy varying levels of support, with some people regarding education in mainstream schools as an inalienable human right (although they might be critical of some of the forms which it takes), whilst others take a more cautious view. Studies of integration have shown marked national and regional variation in the implementation of integration policies.

The pattern of placement of children with special educational needs seems to be a complex one, in which both mainstream and special schools have experienced changes in the populations of pupils they cater for. This picture is likely to become even more complicated by the impact of a range of recent policy initiatives and indeed may have undergone further change since the research was conducted. Pijl and Meijer (1991) have suggested that the United Kingdom may be moving further from a one-track system and closer towards a two-track system of mainstream and special schools. Speaking particularly of England and Wales, they suggest that the national curriculum may facilitate labelling and referral and the obligation to publish output figures at a school level may make teachers less keen to devote time and energy to children with special educational needs. On the other hand, the acceptance of the principle of curriculum entitlement, increased opportunities for parental choice of school and the obligation on all schools to publish their special needs policy may encourage the existing trend towards greater use of mainstream placements. The aim of this research is to examine the effect of these and other factors in Scotland.

Our earlier work (Thomson, Riddell and Dyer, 1989; Allan, Brown and Munn, 1991) indicated that policy outcomes cannot simply be read off from official policy statements. Local policy makers at education authority and classroom level have a marked impact on the way in which these documents are interpreted and translated into

practice. The interviews with education authority personnel are intended to provide insight into the way in which local policies and practices are understood by key individuals who play a vital role in shaping the context in which parents and professionals make decisions.

2

THE NATURE OF EDUCATIONAL PROVISION IN MAINSTREAM AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Education authority policies and provision

Prior to regional reorganisation, each of the twelve Scottish regions had a statement of policy on special educational needs. Formal written policies were in varying stages of development or under review. Policies in two regions had been in place since the early eighties and in three regions, policies had been revised substantially in the last two years. The legislation in Scotland, unlike that in England and Wales, does not state that children with special educational needs should normally be educated in mainstream schools. Regional policies in Scotland do offer recommendations about placements, but these range from emphatic support for mainstreaming to a more cautious stance. Five regions advocated educating pupils with special educational needs **wherever possible in mainstream schools**. One of the region's policy statements was typical:

> It must always be remembered that integration means placing children with learning difficulties in mainstream schools and providing adequately for them.

Policies from three regions and six divisions stated that pupils should be placed in the **least restrictive educational environment.** This appeared also to support mainstream placements, but was less direct and appealed to equal opportunities. In one document, for example, the region argued that its policy:

> is based on the right of all children and young people to be educated in the least restrictive environment possible. This, in effect, implies that their education should take place in their local schools, or as near as can be arranged, with maximum opportunity for social and functional integration of those with special educational needs.

Somewhat more warily, two regions declared a policy of providing both **mainstream and appropriate education** for pupils with special educational needs. In one of the documents, for example, it was asserted that:

> To enable all pupils to receive education appropriate to their needs, [the regional education authority] has provided a well resourced range of special educational provision, both day and residential, whilst emphasising at the same time the general policy that pupils should be educated in mainstream schooling as far as is possible.

Two regions recommended that children should receive an **education appropriate to their needs**. One policy document read:

> Provision of appropriate education will vary from slight modifications to mainstream curriculum to placement in a special school or unit with an individualised education programme.

Table 2.1 identifies the regions making each statement by letter, and this will provide a framework for examining the placement of pupils in mainstream and special schools.

Table 2.1: Regions' Policy Statements

Policy	Region
1. Mainstreaming where possible	C, E, F, K L
2. Least restrictive educational environment	B, H, J, M, N, O, P, Q, R
3. Mainstreaming/appropriate education	D, G
4. Appropriate education	A, I

Note: M, N, O, P, Q and R are divisions within region H
A brief description of the regions is given in Appendix B

Although the regional policies on special educational needs were described as being implemented at the time they were requested, education authority personnel commented on their evolving nature. This was necessary, they argued, in order to take account of a range of factors. Providing opportunities for parental choice and the costs of special needs provision were among the most important influences on policy development. In four of the five regions advocating mainstream placements where possible, there was agreement among the directorate official, the principal psychologist and the adviser (SEN) that this was an accurate reflection of practice. There was less agreement in the other regions about whether the policy statements represented what was taking place or what the region was striving for. The phrases 'least restrictive environment' and 'appropriate education' were open to different interpretations.

Education authority personnel's views on integration

Apart from written policies, the views of education authority personnel are important in understanding the perspectives brought to bear on practice in the regions. The 37 officers (18 directorate, 11 principal educational psychologists and eight SEN advisers - see table 2 on p15) were asked what they thought of their region's policy

on SEN. Most of them (32) expressed a personal opinion about integration and these are summarised in table 2.2.

Table 2.2: EA Personnel's Views on the Integration of Pupils with SEN

Viewpoint	Directorate	Advisers (SEN)	Educational Psych-ologists	Total	Number of Regions Represented
Support for increase in numbers in main-stream schools	3	1	5	9	6
Maintain both main-stream and special school provision	7	3	3	13	8
Reservations about integration	3	4	3	10	7

Nine individuals (five educational psychologists, three members of the directorate, and one adviser) indicated that they supported integration and would like to see a continued increase in the numbers of children with special educational needs being placed in mainstream schools. A psychologist commented:

> Mainstream provision allows for incidental education and enables the handicapped child to be [d in the community. Putting children [in special school] is doing them a disservice, by taking them away from the community and contact with other children, yet the quality of provision is good.

Three of the six regions in which these individuals worked had explicit policy statements advocating mainstreaming. One supported placement in the least restrictive environment and two recommended appropriate placements.

Thirteen officers (seven directorate officials, three educational psychologists and three advisers from eight regions or divisions) said it was important to maintain both mainstream and special schools to provide appropriate education and parental choice. A directorate official indicated that his view had changed in recent years:

> My own view in a sense has changed and is that we should have a proper continuum of provision that does include separate special schools. At one time I might have argued that all children in separate special schools could have their needs met in mainstream settings, but I'm not sure now of the reality of that. I think there will be a place for separate specialised provision. I don't say that easily, because it does go against my own philosophy in this whole area.

One of the policy statements from these officers' regions advocated mainstream placements and four supported placement in the least restrictive environment. Two policies mentioned both mainstream and appropriate education and one recommended appropriate education.

Reservations about integration were expressed by ten individuals (four advisers, three directorate members and three psychologists from seven regions) who said they would welcome a slowing down in trends towards integration. Their concerns related to the pursuit of integration 'as a matter of dogma', disadvantaging some children they felt would be better off in special schools. One directorate official commented:

> Integration has become a sacred cow for some staff. Unless it is well planned it does more harm than good.

Policies in four of the seven regions whose officers had expressed reservations favoured mainstreaming and in the remaining three, the least restrictive environment, mainstreaming and appropriate education or appropriate education only. It is difficult to say how far the officers' personal views on integration influenced the implementation of policy or the patterns of placement within their region. These views are, nevertheless, interesting. It is striking that only a minority endorsed integration unreservedly, given the general support for integration within national and regional policies over the last fifteen years.

Perceptions of the distinctiveness of mainstream and special schools

Directorate officials, principal educational psychologists and advisers in special educational needs were asked to comment on the differences in provision which they saw as being offered in mainstream schools, special schools, and special units. This may have run counter to the notion of a continuum of special education provision, which many had emphasised. It was important, however, to try to identify their perceptions of the characteristics of different types of provision and why they were deemed appropriate for different children. These views have particular significance since they belong to the individuals most directly involved in making decisions about SEN provision and placements.

Several officers commented on the difficulty in making comparisons of this kind, since much depended on how an individual responded to the particular environment. Others drew attention to the lack of research, based on valid measures of progress. Despite this, they seemed to have clear ideas about the distinctiveness of mainstream and special schools. In making these comparisons, however, they were not

necessarily advocating one type of provision over another. The following comment from a directorate official illustrates the dilemma faced in choosing between mainstream and special schools:

> Special schools on one level help socialisation more by providing an appropriate peer group and providing opportunities to mix, understand and operate at a level with peers. On the other hand, there is separation from peers in the community. Special schools are also very good at providing specialist inputs. It falls down where it can be a little precious, over-sheltered and perhaps the socialisation experiences are unrealistically easy. Mainstream has the benefits of being able to provide specialist input, but can still maintain a more realistic social mix.

An adviser made a similar comment about the dilemma faced in making placement choices:

> You also need to balance the opportunity to give more intensive input in special school with opportunities in the mainstream school. So it's difficult to argue that any one setting is the better. I would always argue for both.

Another adviser argued that children may have a range of academic and social needs which had to be prioritised:

> It's a question of which needs we decide are most important and helping parents to decide this.

A similar comment was made by an educational psychologist:

> For some children it's a question of which need you give priority to. If you place them in the local school, you give priority to normalisation and the peer context, but may not be giving priority to specialist expertise and equipment, so it's a question of balance.

Special classes, units or learning centres were described in a variety of ways. Typically, they were viewed as being similar to mainstream provision, a special school, or somewhere between the two.

Meeting academic needs

A number of features were mentioned as important in relation to meeting the pupils' academic needs:

- teachers' expertise
- additional teaching support
- curriculum opportunities

- meeting the needs of pupils with different kinds of difficulties
- school characteristics.

There were different views about whether these were best served by mainstream or by special schools.

Teachers' expertise

Officers agreed that teachers required to be skilled in differentiating the curriculum and in assessment in order to meet children's special educational needs. Nine individuals said that teachers in special schools possessed more expertise of this kind, particularly in establishing positive measures of progress for children with special educational needs and this was seen as valued, especially by parents. Mainstream staff, on the other hand, were seen as having much to learn in matching the curriculum to individual needs and in measuring progress.

The expectations teachers had of pupils' achievement were viewed by a small number of individuals as important, but there was no consensus among officers about this. Expectations of pupils with special educational needs were thought by two directorate members to be too high in mainstream schools and by three officers (two directorate members and one adviser) as too low. Two advisers described staff in special schools as underestimating the achievement of pupils, while two advisers and one directorate member argued the opposite viewpoint.

Additional teaching support

The most important additional support for pupils with special educational needs was seen to be that of a specialist nature, for instance occupational or speech therapy. Education officers said this was easier to organise within special schools than on mainstream sites and could be integrated within the whole curriculum more readily. Attention was drawn also to the amount of support received by individuals, with special schools offering more favourable staffing ratios than mainstream schools. The SJNC Circular SE/23 (amended by SE/57) identifies the following maximum class sizes for particular categories of special educational needs:

Table 2.3: SJNC Circular SE/23 - Maximum Class Sizes

SE/23 Categories	Maximum Numbers
Moderate learning difficulties	10
Severe physical impairment	8
Severe learning difficulties	8
Pronounced hearing loss	6
Pronounced visual impairment	6
Communication difficulties	6
Social and emotional difficulties	6
Profound learning difficulties	10*

* This figure applies where teachers are complemented by support staff

Pupils in mainstream schools might receive a considerable amount of support from special needs auxiliaries, but it was stressed that this was a different kind of support from that of teachers and difficulties in judging the effectiveness of auxiliary support were mentioned.

Curriculum opportunities

Two aspects of curriculum opportunities were considered important: providing experiences which matched the pupils' needs and ensuring entitlement to breadth and balance. Special schools were regarded by eleven officers as more successful at providing individualised programmes, but one adviser suggested that there could be the disadvantage of being detached from the mainstream curriculum. This, however, could also occur in a mainstream setting:

> With mainstream we have to be careful they don't become segregated either, by the way the education is delivered and we also have to watch that they're not becoming lost in terms of their education, that they become so far detached from the mainstream that they're segregated within mainstream (directorate member).

Mainstream schools were said to be able to offer pupils similar experiences to their age group peers, but these might not always be appropriate to the pupils' needs. Speaking of the 5-14 programme, one adviser voiced concern:

> Children in mainstream don't have like peers and the group activity is impossible and when you get into 5-14 listening and talking I think you're really toiling and you possibly set up artificial situations where you might have less able youngsters. In special classes and schools you have a group that can benefit from and

> contribute to the same essence of curriculum. That's where I almost want to make a stand and ask "is this the right placement?" and I think that's where 5-14 is going to do that for us.

Seven officers (four directorate members and three advisers) suggested that mainstream schools had a greater capacity to offer breadth and balance in the curriculum than special schools, particularly where the numbers of teaching staff in special schools were small. Two advisers, however, argued that this was counterbalanced by special schools' greater flexibility. A tendency to 'denigrate the special school curriculum' was, suggested a directorate official, unfair since mainstream staff were often surprised at the quality of the learning of pupils who had come from special schools.

Meeting the needs of pupils with different kinds of difficulties

Several education authority personnel mentioned particular kinds of difficulties as more challenging than others. Meeting the needs of children with emotional or behavioural difficulties, language and communication disorders and complex learning difficulties posed considerable problems, because of the concentration and co-ordination of support required. There was agreement among two thirds of the respondents that special schools were better placed than mainstream schools to cater for children with these kinds of difficulties. Seven officers expressed the view that if children were placed inappropriately, according to their needs, it would be difficult for them to make progress, even if the features of the provision were positive.

School characteristics

The size of school was considered an important factor in meeting pupils' needs. As far as special schools were concerned, four officers suggested small schools could be limited in the extent to which they could provide a broad and balanced curriculum. Mainstream schools, on the other hand, were thought by two officers to be likely to benefit from being small in enabling staff to develop detailed knowledge of children's special educational needs. Two officers commented that mainstream schools in rural areas or in regions with a long tradition of integration were likely to make effective provision and mainstream primary schools were held by three officers to be more successful than secondary schools at meeting pupils' special educational needs.

Meeting social needs

Officers highlighted three dimensions of children's social needs:

- social interaction among pupils with SEN and others
- personal and social development
- the response of individual children to the demands of schooling.

There was no consensus on which school environment, special or mainstream, was more effective at addressing these aspects of children's social needs.

Social interaction among pupils with SEN and others

Several officers stressed the importance of pupils being educated alongside their peers or remaining in their own community. This was seen as having a normalising role, helping to prepare children for independent living. An educational psychologist, giving an example of an autistic child, said:

> If you accept that the biggest handicapping component of autism is the social handicap, then is it not logical to place that child in a normal environment, where they can model on normality? There's nothing we can do to affect the long term outcomes for this boy - he is always going to be autistic. If we can make his behaviour socially acceptable within the community in which he lives and build relations with children of his own age, then surely it can't be wrong.

Four individuals suggested that the expectations of children with special educational needs would be raised by seeing the achievements of age group peers. Officers who expressed these views advocated mainstreaming for maximising opportunities for social interaction.

An alternative argument was provided by four advisers, who said that social interaction could be more effective in special schools. Two reasons were given for this, one of which related to their view of interaction between pupils of similar ability as more meaningful. One adviser commented:

> You get all this superficial kind of stuff about keeping them with their friends in their own community, but when you look at them in the playground, there is no friendship, no real level of a relationship of any true value, whereas if you go into a special school you see the level of a relationship that children have built up with each other. You see true discussion about something because they're at a similar intellectual level and there's real argument about something they both feel very strongly about.

The second reason for viewing special schools as the more effective environment for social interaction concerned negative experiences, which might occur in mainstream schools. This might arise from a child's own perception of being different from age group peers, especially at or around the secondary stage of schooling. Officers were worried, however, about the attitudes among mainstream pupils that might be encountered. An example was given by an adviser:

> They can treat [an SEN child] like a toy or a mascot. That's not a worthwhile relationship. It's only developing a level of tolerance and I don't see why other children should be used in this way. . . I have gone into nurseries or primary schools where an SEN child may be sitting on the teacher's knee or is being cuddled by another child. It makes me question what we are saying to this child.

This was countered by a member of the directorate, who argued that positive relationships could be cultivated within mainstream schools:

> The caricature of ordinary children being cruel to SEN pupils is not common, providing children are led into it, by an explanation of their difficulties. They often are very supportive, but there are some bad examples. It needs to be consciously stimulated and built into strategy.

No examples were given of negative social experiences in special schools, but five officers expressed concern at children being separated from their age peers. Each of the viewpoints, highlighting the effectiveness of mainstream or special schools for providing opportunities for social interaction, offered different interpretations on the process of interaction. One emphasised compatibility of age group as a means of achieving 'normality'; a second focused on matching ability levels to achieve meaningful interaction among children.

Personal and social development

There was agreement that staff required to have an intimate knowledge of the social and emotional needs of pupils, to assist them in making progress in this area. Staff in mainstream and special school settings were seen as equally well equipped to provide such support. Special schools, however, were seen as being more effective in meeting the social and emotional needs of a child, because these were often a more explicit part of the curriculum than in mainstream schools. An adviser described special schools as placing:

> A high emphasis on social skills and personal development, including the whole area of sexuality. Special schools ensure that young people grow up with the information to make the right decisions.

Special schools were also said to provide a more protective environment, but some viewed this positively, while others saw it as restrictive.

The response of individual children to the demands of schooling

Several respondents said that it was difficult to generalise about the social experiences of children with special educational needs, because individuals responded in different ways. Most children, it was suggested, adapted well to the demands of mainstreaming, providing they acquired the necessary social skills. However, a few pupils were said to find the mainstream environment difficult and stressful. One adviser commented:

> I feel very torn about mainstreaming. If a child responds to mainstreaming in a sociable way, then other children will come round and make contact. That's very positive and if the emotional side is fine, then it is a very positive placement. If that's not the case, the school can be very threatening.

A directorate member echoed this view and drew attention to how other children might be affected by the integration of children with particular kinds of difficulties:

> If you're talking about disabled pupils, they've been mainstreamed with great success. One such youngster. . . had a bright personality and did everything, including scooting around on his wheelchair. I would not have dreamt of depriving this youngster of mainstreaming and he moved on to FE. It's a different story with EBD. In class of 30 youngsters where the teacher is using a disproportionate amount of time on one pupil, then I am against integration, because others are suffering.

The environment offered by special schools was also seen as likely to benefit some children more than others, although only a small number of staff commented on this. A directorate member and an adviser suggested that special schools might offer more valuable experiences to children who lacked a supportive home environment:

> If you look at the exam board statistics, you might find children doing better in special school than in mainstream, especially pupils with MLD in areas of deprivation. . . If a child does not have support at home, there is an argument for putting them into special.

This comment was made by a member of the directorate from an authority with a high level of special school placements.

Bridging the gap between mainstream and special schools

One important way of minimising any disadvantages that might arise from the differences between mainstream and special schools was to strengthen the links between them. In most regions, there was some form of association between schools from each sector, usually involving the movement from pupils in special schools into mainstream. Officers expressed firm commitment to improving the links between the two sectors, although a directorate official stressed the need to ensure that links are not simply token gestures. In particular, officers called for a greater sharing of expertise among staff. They envisaged this mainly as moving in one direction, making the knowledge and skills of special school staff available in mainstream schools.

Learning centres, SEN bases and special units, classes or departments (referred to collectively in the report as special units) were also seen as crucial in bridging the gap between mainstream and special schools. A few officers contended that they viewed special units as more similar to mainstream than to special school provision, although in the SOED statistics they were included in the figures for special schools. Most officers described special units as somewhere between the two forms of provision, having elements in common with both special and mainstream schools, as the following comments illustrate:

> For some the special class may be ideal, because it gives the support needed plus opportunities for social or curricular integration (education officer)

> We're trying to capture the excellence of special provision, whilst also maintaining a slot for the child in the community (educational psychologist)

> Youngsters will do standard grade or a module in an ordinary classroom. This may be with or without SEN support. They'll do this for part time and for the other time they will be with like peers and will spend time in an SEN base doing basic/life skills modules. I see this as an appropriate curriculum mix (adviser).

However, several officers stressed that special units could differ in the way they operated, even within regions. One directorate official contrasted two provisions:

> In one school which has a department of special education, there are six classes catering for youngsters previously defined as having MLD. Approximately 80% had some integration, but the majority of their time was spent within the 'warm supportive environment' of the appropriate provision of their facility. In another school, the purpose-built rooms were largely empty because the children spent most of their time in mainstream part of the school. I would not

> have said there was a significant difference in the children's needs and the resources were identical. The main difference was in the senior management attitude and the whole school strategy for supporting staff in mainstream to meet the needs.

The officer added that he believed parents and professionals would regard both units as appropriate.

Mainstream and special schools in two education authorities

Authorities E and H were both pursuing policies of integration, expressed within policy documents as 'mainstreaming where possible', in the case of authority E and placement in 'the least restrictive environment' in H. Figure 5 in Chapter 4 (p69) illustrates the increase in the proportion of recorded children placed in mainstream schools in each authority between 1988 and 1992. Figure 8 (p74) shows a small fall in the population placed in special schools over the same period. Integration had been an explicit part of authority E's policy since 1986. Authority H, on the other hand, had adopted a pro-integrationist stance as recently as 1992. Prior to that, some divisions within the authority had been placing relatively high proportions of children in mainstream schools; in other parts of the authority, mainstreaming figures were much lower. At the time of the research, it was evident that there continued to be marked contrasts in patterns within the divisions. Whilst both authorities supported the principle of placing as many children with SEN in mainstream schools as possible, they also recognised that for some children, the environment of the special school would be the most appropriate placement and sought to preserve at least some schools within this sector. Both authorities received considerable support for SEN policies from elected members, with a high level of political consensus. We consider the policies of each authority, and their impact on mainstream and special schools, below.

Education authority E

This authority had both urban and rural populations and placed pupils with SEN in both mainstream and special schools. There were 16 free standing special schools (day and residential) at the time of the research. Two additional strands of provision had been established within the region:

- Area Special Educational Needs Teams (ASENTs), consisting of staff working in the catchment area of a secondary school and its associated primaries and led by an ASENT co-ordinator
- SEN bases, within primary or secondary schools, providing teaching, support or therapy accommodation for pupils with SEN and staff.

It was envisaged that every secondary school and its associated primaries would have an ASENT team, but would not necessarily have an SEN base. The ASENT team members were not part of a single school's teaching complement, but worked on a peripatetic basis within the team's associated schools. The SEN bases were viewed as an attractive option to the region, offering highly specialised expertise within a mainstream school to pupils who might otherwise be placed within a special school. They also enabled resources to be concentrated in one area (a school) and were more cost effective than placing pupils individually in mainstream schools. The SEN bases were developed, either by relocating special schools on mainstream sites or establishing them 'from scratch' within designated mainstream schools. A review of this aspect of provision, carried out in 1992, reported that a total of twenty SEN bases had been established within the authority (nine located within mainstream primary schools and eleven in secondaries). These appeared to be new provisions which did not result from the closure of special schools, except in one instance. The review indicated that with the rate of five bases being established each academic session, the programme would be completed by 2004. Progress, however, was being slowed by the unsuitability of some mainstream schools to accommodate pupils and one elected member said that schools where staff did not show commitment to integration would not be considered for SEN bases. Parents had also had a braking effect on the development of this aspect of policy. In rural parts of the region, many parents were said to be reluctant to accept an SEN base placement, preferring to send their children to the local mainstream school. Within the city, some parents chose a special school placement instead of a mainstream school with an SEN base. One of the pupils in the case study (Graham) attended a mainstream secondary with an SEN base, which had previously been part of a special school and Graham's experiences are discussed in Chapter 6.

The 1992 review also focused on the role and allocation of the educational psychology service and learning support, Records of Needs procedures and the resourcing of special educational needs. This last aspect is considered in Chapter 5.

Authority H

The authority's new policy on integration was launched in 1992, amid much publicity. As well as revealing a commitment to mainstream placements as 'the least restrictive environment' for the majority of pupils, the authority proposed the establishment of special units within mainstream. Inevitably, this signalled closure or 'rationalisation' for at least some of the authority's 160 special schools, but the authority promised to do this gradually, through a series of divisional development plans and consultation with parents and staff. The education committee agreed to

maintain levels of funding for SEN provision and allowed officers to reinvest any revenue from the closure of special schools within special educational needs and to vire money from one budget head to another. Furthermore, it was made clear that special schools, many of which catered for pupils from the entire authority and beyond, were still an important part of provision.

The development plan for Authority Q, the division within H from which we selected the case study schools, sought to reduce dependence on placements in its 17 free standing special schools, by establishing special units within mainstream schools. Prior to this, some unit provision within mainstream had already been established and the school attended by Raschida and Laura (see Chapter 6) is an example of this. Brian and Stuart (see also Chapter 6), who had attended a mainstream primary school, were about to transfer to a new provision. This had been established in place of the only special school to be closed in the division and was similar to other special units, insofar as it had been located within a mainstream school. However, it had been given a separate name and thus became a school within a school. Consultation with parents was an important part of the development plan and one officer reported that, although initially defensive, parents had eventually agreed that their children would benefit from moving into mainstream. This had not been the case in another division in which the authority's plans to close a special school had to be put 'on ice' because of objections from parents.

Authority H, like E, undertook a major review of its psychological service and Records of Needs procedures, leading to restructuring of the psychological services and the development of guidelines for recording.

Summary

A feature of the education authority personnel's commentary on provision in mainstream and special schools was a constant balancing of social and academic matters. Both were seen as central to the education of children with special needs, but there could be no universal prescription for meeting those needs. In summarising these findings we have looked at what has been said about the kind of **support** (mostly from teachers) that is provided in the two sectors, the factors which influence the **socialisation** of pupils in the different contexts, **curriculum** opportunities in special and mainstream schools and various **general** characteristics of the provision.

Turning first to support in **special** schools, a picture has emerged of more favourable staffing ratios than in mainstream, and teachers with more expertise in differentiation of the curriculum and assessment. In collaboration with specialist contributions from

speech therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and others, these teachers were regarded as being better placed than their mainstream colleagues to provide effective individualised programmes for pupils and to integrate their 'school work' with the other kinds of specialised support they need. Of course, these expert skills and knowledge of teachers in special schools could be made available to the mainstream sector.

The perceived weaknesses of teacher support in special schools were focused primarily on the problems, especially where staff numbers are small, in providing a broad and balanced curriculum (though it was accepted that teachers in such schools generally displayed considerable flexibility to counter this). A further fear, though voiced by only a minority, was that teachers might underestimate the potential of pupils in the special school context.

The major strength perceived in teacher support in **mainstream** settings was the greater capacity to offer breadth and balance in the curriculum. There was considerable doubt, however, about whether mainstream teachers had the necessary competence to match the curriculum to individual needs. While the contribution made by auxiliaries was valued, it was seen as no substitute for teacher expertise. The views on whether mainstream teachers had expectations of pupils that were too high or too low showed variation across respondents, as they did in the case of special schools. The greater capacity of the mainstream schools to offer breadth and balance was tempered by some anxiety that although they could offer children with special educational needs similar experiences to those of their peers, they might be less effective in tailoring such offerings to individual needs. Indeed, concern was expressed that differentiation of method of curriculum delivery could lead to a form of within-class segregation.

Concern about breadth and balance in the curriculum of **special** schools focused essentially on the detachment of pupils with special needs from the mainstream curriculum. In particular, the introduction of the 5-14 programme had as one of its major justifications the issue of entitlement for **all** pupils. There appeared to be three factors which, in the education authority officers' view, could endanger this entitlement: the small size of some special schools, the inevitably limited range of subject expertise among the staff and the lack of provision within the guidelines for attainments of a very modest kind on or below level A. It was pointed out by some respondents, however, that special schools were probably better placed than mainstream to provide the concentrated and co-ordinated support necessary to ensure

that pupils with, for example, social, emotional or behavioural difficulties, or language and communication problems, were involved in general curricular activities.

The social safety of special schools was stressed. Interaction with peers of similar ability was seen by some as a counter to isolation in the wider community, more effective in meeting social and emotional needs and encouraging meaningful relationships. It is possible, of course, for children to be isolated in special schools, but this was not dwelt upon by the respondents. Being in an environment where the work is achievable and achievements are recognised has considerable value, but it was recognised that it could carry with it the stigma of segregation from the community. In contrast, inclusion in mainstream provision was regarded as maximising opportunities for social interaction with the full range of peers and the community more generally, raising pupils expectations of themselves, a preparation for independent living and creating a wider circle of friends. The down-side of such inclusion focused on the possible problems, especially at the secondary level, of young people perceiving themselves as different from others of their own age and experiencing work too difficult for them to manage. The respondents were clear that efforts had to be made to manage the socialisation into mainstream; the attitudes of other children were especially important and reference was made to the possibility of both their over-protection of, and their cruelty towards, pupils with special needs.

At a general level, a view was expressed that at least some pupils with special educational needs become very stressed in mainstream settings, but appear to blossom and be much happier in the protective climate of special schools. Whether this climate is perceived as providing an opportunity for children to thrive or a restrictive environment unsuited to a future in modern society, remained a moot point. Certainly there were those who regarded special classes, units or departments and learning centres as crucial in bridging the gap between special and mainstream provision. Not only did the incidence of this vary among regions, its conception as a 'boost to mainstream' or as a 'special school within mainstream' also varied among individuals. To some extent this was dependent on the characteristics of the mainstream school. Schools that are small, rural, with a tradition of integration and in the primary sector were seen as better placed to offer effective provision. In such circumstances, most children with special needs were expected to adapt well, though it was accepted that a few might still find the experience stressful and difficult and there could always be resource problems, such as a lack of suitable accommodation or equipment. The limitations of mainstream were especially pronounced in meeting the needs of children with severe difficulties, including those of a social, emotional or behavioural kind.

The written policies of the twelve education authorities ranged from explicit endorsements of integration to a more cautious stance. The two education authorities which were the focus of the case studies were at different stages in their development of policies on integration. Region E had a long-standing commitment to the use of mainstream wherever possible, to special units (allowing integration for part of the curriculum) and to special schools. It was envisaged that the number of special schools would be gradually reduced and the number of special units increased. Region H had far fewer special units and a higher proportion of special schools. Officers' views on future policy development, however, were remarkably similar to those in E. Both regions recognised the value of special units or SEN bases (referred to from now on as special units) as providing an acceptable middle ground between mainstream and special schools. It was also seen as a more cost-effective form of provision than special schools which were not functioning at capacity or the placement of large numbers of pupils with SEN in their local schools (with high teaching and non-teaching staff costs). Parents were viewed as key figures, who could make or break integration policies, by officers in both authorities. Recent major reviews within the two authorities had focused particularly on the recording process and the role of the psychological service in this process and in provision generally. Each of the authorities was responding to the absence of guidelines on recording from SOED and the need to have something in place in time for the policy changes anticipated over the next few years. It is to these changes which we now turn.

3

PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF POLICY CHANGES ON PATTERNS OF PROVISION IN MAINSTREAM AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Introduction

The cluster of recent policy innovations is likely to have a significant bearing on provision for children with special educational needs. Legislation on parental choice has placed parents in the role of consumers, with rights to select a school for their child, receive information on progress and appeal 'if things go wrong' (Scottish Office, 1995). Wherever children with special educational needs are placed, mainstream, special school or unit, they are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum within the 5-14 programme. At the same time as the government has taken a more centralised role on curriculum matters, it has legislated to wrest financial control from local authorities. Schemes for devolved school management will be in operation in all mainstream schools by April 1996 and in all special schools by 1997. Responsibility for SEN provision (at least for recorded pupils) is likely to be retained by the existing twelve regional and island councils. In 1996, however, they and the 53 district councils will be replaced by 32 unitary councils, 19 of which fall short of the minimum population of 200,000, recommended by the Wheatly Commission (1969) to allow for economies of scale. The future of local authority education provision is far from clear at the time of writing, consequently much of this chapter is speculative. It considers how those closest to the policy changes perceived their likely impact on patterns of provision in mainstream and special schools. We report on the perspectives of officers from the twelve regions. We also consider the impact of these policies in more detail within the two education authorities. Table 3.1 identifies the sources of data to which this chapter relates.

Table 3.1: Sources of Interview Data

All Education Authorities	**Authority E**	**Authority H**	**Parents**
18 directorate 11 principal educational psychologists 8 SEN advisers **Total 37**	4 directorate 6 area education officers 2 educational psychologists 1 adviser 3 elected members **Total 16**	6 directorate 1 educational psychologist 3 advisers 3 elected members **Total 13**	31 parents of pupils in case studies **Total 31**

Respondents from the two education authorities were selected in relation to particular aspects of our research questions (eg resources or parents). We interviewed parents of 31 pupils with whom we conducted case studies (one parent declined to be interviewed). Chapters 6 and 7 report the findings from 24 of the case studies, but in this chapter, the views of all the parents interviewed are included. Interview schedules are contained in Appendix A.

Parental choice

In chapter 6, we report on placement decisions in more detail, particularly in relation to parental involvement in the process. Here we consider the impact of parents on patterns of provision from different perspectives. We begin with the officials from each of the education authorities (n =37) and their perceptions of the choices made by parents, the availability of choice and the tensions between them and parents. These are then contrasted with the views of 31 parents of pupils with special needs. We report what the parents liked and disliked about their child's placement. These factors did not always have a bearing on the actual placement decision, but are nevertheless important. Parents' views on the choices available and the tensions they encountered are also considered. In the final part of this section, we examine the impact of parents on policy within two case study authorities, at school level and on the provision for individual pupils.

The nature of the choices made by parents

Local authority officers were asked to comment on parents' choices of placements. Such choices are an important element in the context within which decisions are made about placements of children with special educational needs. There was a high level of consensus among local authority personnel about the features of special and mainstream placements which parents valued (See Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: EA Personnel's Views of the Values Placed by Parents on Special and Mainstream Schools

Special School Strengths	Mainstream School Strengths
Low teacher: pupil ratios	The child remains in community
Expertise and motivation of special school staff	Avoidance of stigma associated with special schools
Protective environment	Academic environment, with wide choice of subjects
Social and personal goals readily achieved	

Several officers mentioned that parents favouring special schools were more concerned about their child's social and emotional well-being than about academic goals. One member of the directorate commented:

> If a child is moved from mainstream to special, parents see the difference overnight. The child gets more attention, there's less pressure and the child reacts better to the whole environment. Most parents are less concerned with academic goals than people in education think. If you ask them, they want their child to be happy at school and not to feel threatened by the situation.

This raises interesting questions about the judgements and priorities accorded by education authorities to parents' views and choices. What influence on placement decisions is exerted by a parental view that is judged by professionals not to be in the best interests of the child? Parents preferring special schools were reported as valuing the low teacher:pupil ratios and the motivation and expertise of staff, which they thought would benefit their child through extra attention. They were also said to value the more protective environment offered by special schools.

Enabling a child to go to the local school was by far the most common reason attributed to parents opting for mainstream, and was viewed as particularly important for parents of primary aged children. The establishment of friendships within the whole community of children was seen as vital to those wishing a mainstream placement for their child. There is perhaps an interesting contrast here with those who supported a special school placement; the latter were regarded as emphasising their child's relationships with teachers or other adults rather than with other children.

While there was agreement among education authority personnel on parents' reasons for preferring special or mainstream placements, such agreement was less apparent when they were asked about the actual choices which most parents were making (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: EA Personnel's Views of the Choices Made by Most Parents

Choices Made by Most Parents in Region	Directorate	Advisers (SEN)	Educational Psychologists	Total	Number of Regions/ Divisions
Parents likely to choose both mainstream and special schools	10	6	5	21	13
Parents likely to choose mainstream schools	8	3	2	13	10

More than half (21) said that parents supported mainstream and special school placements in equal proportions. One directorate official commented:

> Once children are in special schools, parents think it's wonderful. They become very defensive and it's difficult to close. You also have a group of parents who won't hear of their child being in special school, because of the stigma. There are no half measures.

Just over a third (13), however, claimed that most parents expressed a preference for mainstreaming, but usually only under particular conditions.

> The balance of parents' views is for integration, providing we can give guarantees about safety and levels of support. There are some parents who will not have it at any price. There tends to be polarisation of views and we are trying to convince parents that it is not an either-or (Directorate official).

In three regions, most parents were described as favouring local, but not necessarily mainstream, placements. No-one suggested that parents were mainly in favour of special schools.

Whatever their preferences, parents were seen by education officers as having firm ideas of what was best for their child. An important task that officers saw for themselves in many cases was to try to widen parents' perceptions of their child's needs and of the placement options available. In some regions, however, the extent of parental choice was more limited than in others.

Opportunities for choice: EA Officers' views

A large majority (31) of the officers commented on the opportunities available to parents to make choice between and within mainstream and special school sectors (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: EA Personnel's Views of the Opportunities for Choices for Parents

Opportunities for Parents to Choose Between SEN Provisions	Direct-orate	Advisers (SEN)	Educa-tional Psych-ologists	Total	Number of Regions/ Divisions
Extensive choice	5	3	8	16	9
Restricted choice	6	4	5	15	10

Fifteen respondents argued that the opportunities for parents to make choices were **restricted**. In most cases, this related to the numbers of mainstream or special schools within a locale able to provide realistic placements for particular children. Two officers from different regions, however, indicated a need to restrict parental choice for financial reasons.

A similar number (16) described parental choice as **extensive**. Officers said they tried to emphasise to parents the notion of a continuum of special educational needs provision. In reality, however, it seemed that the choice was often more stark. Parents usually had the opportunity to choose **between sectors,** that is, either a special or a mainstream school, but it was only parents in urban areas who commonly could select **between schools within sectors**. Several respondents pointed to a commitment within their region to the principle of choice and to the need to make parents more aware of the options available. However, as an educational psychologist pointed out:

> It's terribly difficult to make sure that you are offering parents enough help to become involved but not patronising them and making them feel as if they're not capable of making their own decision.

Recent government legislation was seen as having raised expectations among parents by empowering them to make choices. Despite this, officers suggested that some parents still felt unable to make decisions about their children's education provision.

Tensions Between education authorities and parents

Most officers described relationships with parents as good and said they tried to provide as much information and support for them as possible. Twenty seven respondents mentioned a small number of cases where sensitivities arose in the relationships with parents. These usually related to conflicting notions about where the parents and the local authorities wanted to place a child. Later in this section, we report the parents' views, but here we focus on what the **education officers** saw as the sources of unease.

There was no overall picture of parents pursuing one kind of provision and regions another. Tensions arose over both mainstream and special school placements. The most common sources of unease, according to the education officers, are listed in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: EA Personnel's Views of Tensions in Relationships with Parents

Source of Unease	Direct-orate	Advisers (SEN)	Educa-tional Psych-ologists	Total	Number of Regions/ Divisions
Personal tensions with parents	14	4	9	27	16
The problems of making parents aware of options	7	2	2	11	10
Parents making unwise (in the opinion of the EA) choices	2	5	4	11	10
Conflict between parental choice and strategic planning/ financial priorities	6	2	-	8	7
Demands for placements outside region	2	-	1	3	3
Perceptions of higher costs in mainstream than in special schools	-	2	-	2	2
The dangers of appearing to patronise parents	-	-	2	2	2

One adviser commented on the dilemma which parental choice raised for education authorities:

> When you offer options of placements to parents and you say to them that they're part of the decision-making process, then you have to seriously allow them to make decisions. There are times when it would be easier if we didn't do that, if we just placed them.

Another suggested that there comes a point at which the education authority has to make it clear that it 'knows best':

> There is a will towards involving parents, but it does require honesty and confidence to say no to them.

Where tensions had arisen over what education authorities thought was an unwise choice, the parents had usually advocated a mainstream placement, whereas the education officer had recommended a special school. Most officers indicated that the region would accede to parents' wishes, even if they felt they were wrong, but one directorate official commented:

> There's some feeling in the authority that integration is a middle class concept. There's some evidence that middle class parents want integration for appearance sake, along with the other benefits. . . We have to listen to parents, but I question whether we accede to their views because they are middle class and shout loud or whether they have best interests of the child at heart.

An adviser commented that it was the parents advocating segregation who had the loudest voice and who were most likely to be listened to. Officers from three regions reported that where there were differences of opinion on the appropriate placement for a child, such disagreements would be stated on the Record of Needs. For those parents who were thought to be making uninformed judgements, whether for mainstream or special school placements, efforts were made to make other options clear.

Where the costs of a placement were the source of concern to officers, the parents had often requested a placement outside the region. Most commonly, the children concerned experienced complex learning difficulties or sensory difficulties. An alternative regional placement, recommended by the education officers, was likely to be less expensive. However, officers said they also based their suggestions on the perceived ability of regional special schools to cope with children with particular difficulties. Those commenting on this issue said that ultimately costs would not prevent the placement of a child in a specialist national provision, such as the Royal Blind School, if this was deemed appropriate.

The choices of parents were seen by some officers as conflicting with the planning and implementation of special educational needs policy, particularly in relation to costs. The individual placement of large numbers of children in their local mainstream school could be very costly, especially if additional teaching or auxiliary support was required. One directorate official commented:

> I think parents will exert more pressure for mainstreaming and we may need to stand up to them, in view of the escalating costs of mainstreaming. At the moment, we generally give in to parents and are not prepared to stand up to them.

Resourcing schools to provide for children with particular kinds of difficulties or establishing special educational needs bases on mainstream sites might be a more economical option than placing children individually in mainstream schools, but these schools may not be regarded as suitable by parents. If the region is also maintaining special schools, some of these may be running inefficiently and rationalisation may be necessary. However efforts to ensure that resources are targeted could conflict with parents' choice of school. We consider resource issues more closely in Chapter 5.

Parents were consulted on a collective basis, either through schools or voluntary organisations, on matters concerning changes in provision or school closure. Officers sought to reassure parents that the interests of children with special educational needs were of prime consideration and resources would be safeguarded, even though they might be reallocated. The process of consultation was portrayed as informal and friendly by some officers, but as more highly charged by others, particularly when the question of school closure arose.

Parents' perceptions of choice

Chapter 6 explores the factors influencing placement decisions and parents' involvement in that process in more detail. Here we report on the features of mainstream and special schools which parents valued, although these did not always influence the choice of placement. We also discuss the range of options which parents saw as being available to them and some of the tensions they identified between them and the education authorities.

We interviewed 32 parents of children with special educational needs. Sixteen of these had children in mainstream schools and sixteen had children in special schools. Twenty four of the children are the focus of chapters 6 and 7. Parents highlighted a variety of positive and negative features of the mainstream and special school placements of their child. Most of the comments related to their child's own school,

rather than to schools in the mainstream or special sector in general. Table 3.6 reports on the views of eleven of the sixteen parents whose children were in mainstream schools (the remaining five had children in mainstream schools with a special unit and their views are considered separately).

Table 3.6: Parents' Perceptions of the Positive and Negative Features of Mainstream Schools (N = 11)

Strengths	No of parents	Weaknesses	No of parents
Child is in local school	5	Mainstream teachers' inexperience in meeting SEN	2
Child is happy with placement	4	Lack of support for mainstream teachers	1
School's features suits child's needs	2	Teachers have narrow view of integration	1
Better than special school	2	Child's lack of academic progress	1
Social benefits to child	2		
Social benefits to mainstream pupils	1		

Turning to the special schools, Table 3.7, shows the positive and negative features identified by the parents whose children were placed there (one parent was not interviewed).

Table 3.7: Parents' Perceptions of the Positive and Negative Features of Special Schools (N =15)

Strengths	No of parents	Weaknesses	No of parents
Child more likely to cope than in mainstream	6	Child's lack of academic progress	3
Better than other special schools	5	Absence of role models	2
Better than mainstream school previously attended	4	Class size bigger than expected	1
Child is happy with placement	3		
Mainstream school could not cope with child	2		
Child receives individual attention	2		
Teachers' skills and knowledge of child	2		
Availability of specialist provision	1		

Five children were placed within a mainstream school with a special school and their parents highlighted mostly positive features.

Table 3.8: Parents' Perceptions of the Positive and Negative Features of Special Units Within Mainstream Schools (N =5)

Strengths	No of parents	Weaknesses	No of parents
Unit provides specialist support for child's needs	2	School is some distance from home	2
Child obtains 'the best of both worlds'	2		
Child is happy with placement	2		
Good general features of school	1		

It is important to be cautious when comparing the parents' views with those of the education authority officers. Parents' comments related to the features of the school which were most important for their own child, whereas officers were reflecting on parents' general perceptions of mainstream and special schools (but not special units). There are, however, some interesting contrasts. The most striking is that parents

identified **both** positive and negative feature of their child's placements, suggesting that they did not have fixed ideas about what was best for their child, as several local authority officers had volunteered. Parents of pupils in mainstream agreed with officers on the value of the child remaining within the community, but beyond that they emphasised the child's perceptions of the benefits (including his or her satisfaction with the placement) and its suitability for particular special needs. They did not, as the education officers had suggested, emphasise the wide academic environment or the stigma associated with special schools as positive and negative features (although these were obviously important to some of the parents). The concerns of the small number of parents focused mainly on mainstream teachers and their lack of experience, limited view of integration and inadequate support.

The parents whose children were in special school also had different views to those ascribed to them by the education authority officers. In some cases, their children had previous experience of mainstream education and their parents' comments tended to reflect experiences of both environments. The greater likelihood of the child coping (and of the teachers being able to meet their needs) in special than in mainstream was emphasised by parents (but not EA officers), as was the superiority of the particular school over others in the special or mainstream sector. There was agreement, however, with education authority officers' judgements about the importance of the teachers' expertise. The protective environment, the achievement of social and personal goals and the low teacher:pupil ratios were not, as the education officers had speculated, emphasised as the most important features of the special schools (although it could be inferred that these features enable pupils to cope, which parents did emphasise). One parent of a child in special school expressed disappointment that the ratios were higher than expected and other negative features of special schools were the lack of academic progress made by their child and the absence of positive role models. It was interesting that parents in both special and mainstream sectors were disappointed with their children's academic progress. Table 3.6 seems to suggest that parents' regarded the positive features of their child's special school as outweighing the negative aspects.

The features which parents identified did not always influence the choice of placement for their child. One reason for this was that many parents regarded their opportunities for choice as being limited. Their views are reported in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9: Parents' Perceptions of the Opportunities for Choice (N =31)

Opportunities to choose between SEN provisions	Number of parents
Extensive choice of provisions	4
Choice restricted by professionals	11
Choice restricted by available provision	4
Family circumstances determined choice	5
Options were not considered	7

We asked parents about what options had been available other than the final placement. We probed for the possibility of alternatives within and between mainstream and special school sectors and from their answers inferred the extent of choice. Of the 31 parents interviewed, only four thought they had been offered an extensive choice of SEN provisions. More commonly, parents found their choices were limited by professionals, who gave them a narrow set of options (or none at all) or conveyed their opinions about where a child should be placed in a manner which closed down, rather than opened up, opportunities. A smaller number of parents considered the small range of provision available for their child's needs was restrictive, while in some cases choice was determined by family circumstances. All but one of the parents who said they had not considered options had placed their child in the local mainstream school. The restriction of choice by professionals was one of the sources of tension identified by parents and these are listed in Table 3.10.

Table 3.10: Parents' Perceptions of Tensions in Relationships with EA Personnel

Source of unease	Number of parents
Choice of placement restricted by professionals	11
Opinions not valued at Record of Needs reviews	7
Uncertainty over the recording process	5
Having to push for resources for child	5
Mismatch between provision stated in Record of Needs and what is actually provided	3
Delay in identification of difficulties	3
Transport problems	1

Both parents and education authority officers shared a concern over placement decisions, but where the professionals worried about communicating the options to

parents and about unwise decisions they might make, many parents saw the professionals as a barrier to the decision-making process. Resources were highlighted as a problem by both, but for officers this related to conflicts with strategic planning and rising costs overall. Parents, understandably, drew attention to the effect of inadequate resourcing on their child and on their need to make demands on the system. The process of opening and reviewing Records of Needs was criticised by several parents, but not by education officers. The parents seemed to find it an alienating procedure, in which their own views were not valued, and which did not always guarantee the stated provision.

Few parents said they did anything to address the tensions with education authority personnel. Even those who said they had to fight for resources did little beyond making their views known. Most conveyed a sense of being at the mercy of professionals who took decisions about their child's future without any real regard for their views. There were, however, some exceptions. For example, the mother of Susan, a girl with physical difficulties fought a campaign to obtain physiotherapy provision within her mainstream school. Letters to members of parliament and the Secretary of State for Scotland led to a visit from Scottish Home and Health Department officials and a physiotherapist arrived promptly. Adam's mother appealed directly to the assistant director of education for additional resources for the school her son was transferring to. According to the learning support teacher, she had 'kicked up quite a fuss', the outcome of which was an additional 0.3 learning support staffing allowance for the school.

Parental influence on policy

Officers in authorities E and H were certain that parents had influenced the development of SEN policy and placement patterns. In authority E, parents had influenced placement levels in both mainstream and special schools. In rural parts of the region, plans to develop SEN bases within mainstream schools had been slowed down by the decisions of parents to place their children in their local school. This had also contributed to high levels of auxiliary costs in certain areas. Within urban areas, parents had exercised their choice between special schools and had rejected the least popular:

> There's a problem of low morale and uncertainty in some inner city schools. For example [school A] has falling rolls because of shift in population and the parents' charter - it is not a popular school. The same staff have remained there and are worrying about their future. . . Two other schools are all range schools and are full - their morale is affected by the fact that they are stretched,

whereas [school A] sees itself as going down the hill (SEN adviser).

Authority H demonstrated its commitment to involving parents in the policy process, by establishing parents' consultation groups and appointing an educational development officer with responsibility for parents. The region even went so far as introducing a charter of parental expectations, which bore little resemblance to its central government counterpart. Parents had a right, it said, to express an opinion on the services provided by the region and should expect to participate in decisions affecting them and their children. The document was criticised on the one hand, however, for raising expectations among parents which schools could not fulfil and, on the other, dismissed as 'tokenist and wimpish' (TESS, 22 July 1994). One of the consultation groups comprised parents of children with special educational needs, who enjoyed the heady experience of a face-to-face encounter with the director of education and other senior officials. There was little evidence at the meeting attended that parents were challenging the authority over major educational policy questions, but they were being used as a sounding board on some aspects of practice and the region seemed willing to take account of their views. Several documents for parents were produced, including 5-14 parent prompts and information leaflets, with the imprimatur of the group members.

The officer with responsibility for parents had a complicated remit which included acting as advocate for parents, as an advisor to schools to improve their relationships with parents and as a representative of the region.

Schools' support for parents

One of the case study special schools in authority H had established a room for parents. It functioned mainly as an informal coffee lounge, where parents could go whilst their children were at school. In addition, speakers were invited to talk to the parents about a range of issues concerning their children. The parents welcomed, above all, the opportunity to talk about their children and 'to know that other people are going through the same things', but one particularly helpful 'talk' had related to income support entitlements. This is an area which other parents in the case studies felt the school had been a valuable source of information. Three parents indicated that school staff had alerted them to their entitlement to claim an allowance on behalf of their child and their material circumstances had improved as a result. The kind of peer support which these parents valued could be more difficult to achieve in mainstream schools, where there are likely to be fewer children with SEN and fewer opportunities for socialisation among parents.

Voluntary Organisations

Relationships between local authority officers and voluntary organisations were said to be good, with mention of consultation over policy development in ten regions or divisions. One directorate member argued:

> Lots of time has been invested in consultation with AFASIC, Autism, hearing impairment and visual impairment groups etc. I've done the rounds. . . They can have a very important political influence both locally and nationally.

However, officers said that it was important to ensure that groups did not become too powerful as their particular interests might exclude those of other, less influential, groups. One directorate member commented that a single voluntary organisation 'could commit our entire SEN budget, if we allowed it to'. Twenty six individuals mentioned their concern about the power of voluntary organisations. This related in part to the possibility that they might challenge the notion of a continuum of special educational need. Most associations serve the interests of children with particular kinds of difficulties and often placed pressure on local authorities to record children or to make special provision. This was seen as categorisation and reinforcing labels which officers were trying were trying to avoid.

Certain voluntary organisations were described as more active than others. Of these, the most prominent were groups representing specific learning difficulties, autism and aphasia. These associations were reported to be largely in favour of specialist provision, but not necessarily in a special school. In many cases they advocated a separate unit within a mainstream school. Other groups supported mainstreaming, for instance for children with Down's syndrome.

Voluntary organisations concerned with special educational needs have traditionally fulfilled an advocacy role on behalf of children with particular difficulties and their parents. However, it is important to make a distinction between such groups and parents. The viewpoint expressed by these organisations might not be representative of the views of all parents. Nevertheless, twenty four of the education authority respondents described the influence of voluntary organisations as important and likely to increase in the years ahead. Concern about costs and the introduction of devolved school management, for example, could make voluntary organisations adopt a more active lobbying role, if they perceived a greater need to safeguard resources.

The 5-14 programme

As we reported in Chapter 2, education officers in the twelve authorities emphasised the importance of providing experiences which matched the pupils' needs and ensuring entitlement to breadth and balance. Officials drew attention to the relative strengths and weaknesses in providing this in the context of the 5-14 programme.

The educational development officer in authority H with a parental remit had developed a series of parent prompts relating to the 5-14 programme. This aimed to make connections between what parents might normally do with their children, for example watch television together, and the strands of listening, talking, reading and writing within the 5-14 language programme.

In the case studies of mainstream and special schools, teachers were not asked explicit questions about the 5-14 programme. Some, however, made reference to the 5-14 programme in the context of their discussions about the academic goals for individual pupils. Special school staff had rather more to say about the 5-14 programme in relation to pupils with SEN than their colleagues in mainstream schools did. Much of this, however, was negative, with dissatisfaction that they had not been fully involved in the early stages of the 5-14 development:

> Special schools are always an afterthought - we are never involved in initiatives in the early stages. They do things for the secondary schools etc then they remember about us and do something for us (Special school headteacher).

Despite this, most of the special school staff welcomed the notion of an entitlement for all pupils. They were critical, however, of the lack of support on the implementation of the programme, particularly in relation to progressive stages of achievement for pupils below level A:

> Pre-level A is much needed and something should be done about this nationally. We've produced our own pre A strands for English and maths, but not the others yet. I feel we shouldn't have to have done that (Special school headteacher)

> The 5-14 has very good guidelines but we have. . . had to set up committees to rehash and to manufacture programmes that are more relevant and pertinent to our youngsters (Special school headteacher)

> Nobody has yet come up with pre-level A. We've had no help, no training, no advice, yet people come up and say to you "you're following 5-14" (Special school headteacher).

The case studies were conducted during 1993/94, just after the publication of a support pack *Support for learning: special educational needs within the 5-14 curriculum*. Teachers said these materials had not been particularly helpful to them, although they may not have had sufficient time to implement them. Subject advisers had been conspicuous by their absence in special schools and had offered little help in general in relation to pupils with special educational needs. Without support and guidance nationally, there was concern about whether curriculum entitlement would be a reality for all pupils or merely a 'glorified statement':

> We will look at the needs of the child and we'll fix programmes of work that suit the needs of the child, keeping in mind 5-14 and the various levels of work expected. . . so we're very much into being aware of 5-14 and what's being asked. . . but we would see our kids' priorities as not being addressed by 5-14. . . we're not going to be led by it (Special school headteacher).

An assistant headteacher from the same school commented on the 'grief' experienced by staff trying to marry children's needs with the 5-14 programme:

> The longer we do it, the more we realise it doesn't work. We're having to go back to our original position of making up programmes of work for children and . . . if it fits in with 5-14, then good and well, but if it doesn't, you just have to leave it at that. . . We've expended a lot of time looking at 5-14 and coming to this point and it might have been easier if we hadn't been put under pressure from the Scottish Office and the region and from parents who expect us to implement things like that.

A teacher in this school said that the main effect of the implementation of the 5-14 programme had been to dent staff's confidence in their existing skills and expertise. A headteacher from another special school suggested that the introduction of the 5-14 programme might have reinforced the deficit model which staff had 'worked so hard to withdraw'.

Twelve of the 32 pupils in the case studies were beyond the age limit of the programme and were following other courses (for example standard grades or Scotvec modules). Of the remaining twenty pupils, the 5-14 programme was seen as appropriate for seven. These pupils had physical difficulties, sensory impairment or emotional or behavioural difficulties. Staff encountered problems in making provision within the programme, but nevertheless regarded it as appropriate for a further ten pupils (with either moderate or severe learning difficulties, SEBD or language/communication disorders). For three of the pupils in special school (two with severe or profound difficulties and one with Down's syndrome), attainment of

targets within the programme was seen as unrealistic by staff. The teachers of one of these pupils planned to move him into a class which would follow an 'alternative curriculum', with an emphasis on practical and life skills.

Even where pupils were considered capable of attaining targets at level A, staff in both special and mainstream schools were concerned that parents might be drawn into the culture of achievement, supported by testing and reporting. Many pupils, including those in the case study, were likely to remain at level A for much of their school career and teachers worried that information on levels of attainment might merely reinforce failure for their parents:

> The reporting is another double edged sword because if children are seen to be working towards level A year in, year out, what good does it do them to have it shoved under their nose and parents are asking "what recognition do you give to these levels?" (Mainstream leaning support teacher).
>
> I have asked the parents if they want their child tested - most leave it to us to judge when it's most appropriate. One parent wants to see how her pre level A ten year old compares with others of his age - if she wants that heartbreak, that's up to her. 5-14 really shows up the differences between them and mainstream kids (Special school headteacher).

Teachers said their greatest need was for opportunities to share materials for what they referred to as pre-level A.

Devolved school management

Education authority officers and elected members were largely positive about the introduction of schemes for devolved school management. They envisaged advantages to the schools in shifting the locus of decision making to them and improvements in the distribution of resources and monitoring of spending. Their main concern, however, related to the combined impact of DSM and local government reorganisation and to the danger that pupils with SEN but **without Records of Needs** might be disadvantaged. The authorities' schemes for devolved school management and their perceived impact are considered in more detail in Chapter 5. Below we report on the anticipated effects of local government reorganisation, together with devolved school management, on SEN provision.

Local government reorganisation

The impact of local government restructuring was yet to be felt, but was regarded by several education officers across Scotland and by elected members and school staff of the two case study authorities as the policy innovation which would pose the most serious threat to provision for special educational needs[1] . While officers were concerned about how special education provision would be managed within single tier authorities, the elected members regretted above all the demise of structures which they considered to have been highly supportive of children with special educational needs. This support had traversed political boundaries within regional councils and had led to continued increases in spending on SEN provision in the face of cuts in other parts of education budgets.

Before regional reorganisation, the populations of the two case study local authorities, E and H, were 506,000 and 2,306,000 respectively. Authority Q, the division within authority H from which we selected the case study schools, had a population of 497,470. Authorities E and H had already experienced a measure of decentralisation of educational resources prior to restructuring. Under the new arrangements, due to come into effect in 1996, authority E's five administrative areas were redrawn around three boundaries, while the six divisions within region H were translated into 12 new councils. Authority Q would effectively split in half.

Both authorities had enjoyed considerable advantages in economies of scale and officers and elected members feared the effects of the loss of this under reorganisation. Special educational needs provision was considered to be particularly vulnerable for a number of reasons:

- a multi-agency approach to meeting needs may be more difficult with larger number of authorities and fragmentation of services within them
- small local authorities could find it difficult to provide the range of services and support for children with special educational needs
- specialist establishments (eg for language and communication disorders) are highly expensive and may face an uncertain future within the authority which inherits them
- new elected councils may not share SEN policy priorities of predecessors and elected members (who may have formerly served district councils) may have little experience or understanding of special educational needs.

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[1] The SOED considered this statement to be 'overly pessimistic' and responded by recommending that new authorities should 'maximise opportunities for scale economies by cross boundary co-operation and by making use of the central provision of other agencies' (SOED, 16 August, 1995).

- schools may not be willing to allocate resources, which are not ring fenced, to special educational needs and non-recorded pupils may be especially vulnerable
- the increased number of authorities could make parental choice more difficult, as parents may have to make application to more than one authority.

Officers and elected members also voiced concern about non-statutory elements of the education budget, such as nursery provision, particularly important for the early intervention for children with SEN.

Considerable support for the 5-14 programme had been forthcoming from education authorities, through the establishment of clusters of primary, secondary and special schools. This had been welcomed by authorities and schools, particularly those in the special school sector, who had benefited from the exchange of expertise. The future of these clusters under local government reorganisation was uncertain.

In Scotland, only a few schools have considered opting out, usually as a final measure when faced with the prospect of closure or wishing to change the nature of their provision. It is possible that schools holding at least 85% of the potential schools budget could find opting out a more attractive prospect if they are dissatisfied with the provision available within a newly constructed authority. Officers and elected members, however, did not view this as likely:

> Given the culture of the society of people within [the] region, I would find that very surprising. I think strenuous efforts have been made since the Michael Forsyth days to encourage school boards in particular to say this is a wonderful thing. . . I think parents would feel far less secure opting out of the regional council or the new authority structure . . . there is no support for the government's drive to opt out (Elected member).

Officers and elected members did, however, envisage a scenario in which headteachers placed pressure on authorities to devolve a higher proportion of the budget than the 80% currently being planned. While authorities are expected to retain responsibility for SEN provision at the 'centre', pressure to devolve more resources to schools would be likely to limit the flexibility to provide all of the services and support associated with SEN provision.

While officers in most of the authorities seemed to accept the inevitability of the government's plans to introduce single tier structures, authority H, which John Major referred to as the 'monstrosity' his government was seeking to destroy, refused to lie down. It fought a strenuous campaign until the Local Government etc (Scotland) Bill

received the Royal assent. The campaign focused particularly on the plan to repeal the statutory obligation on the new authorities to appoint a director of education, insisting that such a post was necessary to guide the elected members and education committees. This position was also taken up by the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland.

Authority H's campaign was informed by a study visit to the Inner London boroughs to learn lessons from the dismantling of ILEA. This fuelled many of the concerns of the regional officers, since the new boroughs had experienced:

- loss of expertise, especially in cross borough services
- additional administration costs and increased bureaucracy
- staffing difficulties and problems recruiting in some areas
- loss of capacity for strategic planning/action
- budget/finance difficulties with gulfs between rich and poor authorities and an overall reduction on spending on education, especially in non-statutory areas.

Special educational needs, although part of statutory provision within the school sector, was adversely affected. Some boroughs, in which the provision 'inherited' did not meet particular needs, faced large costs transporting children to other boroughs. New provisions could not be built because of the absence of capital allocations in the transitional and subsequent budgets. Provision for children with emotional or behavioural difficulties was reduced in Inner London by the closure of schools and the discontinuation of support by some headteachers for mainstream provision. One borough's budgetary cuts had resulted in so many job losses among SEN staff that it was suspected that legal staffing requirements were being breached.

Local government reform is now, of course, a reality, with the newly elected members forming a shadow administration for one year from April 1995. Inevitably there will be some inertia as far as the development of SEN provision is concerned while the new education authorities sort themselves out and determine priorities. Until they begin functioning fully in 1996, it is difficult to do more than speculate on how pupils' special educational needs will be met. The messages from ILEA do not inspire confidence.

Summary

Parents were seen by education authority officers and elected members as having an influence on placement patterns overall, through the kinds of choices they were making, but they may have been referring to a few parents who had been assertive about placement decisions. Parents within the case study conveyed a sense of powerlessness in this respect. Only four of the 31 parents interviewed considered themselves to have had an extensive choice of provision, while others thought their choices had been restricted by professionals or by what was available to them. Parents identified strengths and weakness of mainstream schools, special schools and special units, but not all of these coincided with what local authority officers' thought they valued. A variety of sources of unease and tension between parents and education authorities was identified by both parties Not surprisingly, cases where parental preference was not in agreement with what the education authority judged to be the best placement for the child constituted those with the greatest cause for anxiety for education authority officers. Tensions for parents in the case studies arose over placement decisions and the recording process. Several parents felt that professionals were setting the agenda and disregarding their own views about what was best for their child.

Relationships with the voluntary organisations were reported as good, and resources were readily put into consultation with them. Their contribution was valued and their strengths accepted. There was some anxiety, however, that the most influential organisations could place children with particular kinds of difficulties at an advantage over others, particularly in the provision of resources, and could contribute to what some education authority officers regarded as unnecessarily damaging categorisation of pupils. The majority of the parents in the case studies clearly did not consider themselves to have had an influence on education authority policy on special educational needs.

The notion of curriculum entitlement for all pupils seemed attractive to everyone, yet in practice was difficult to achieve. Special school staff seemed to feel they were manipulating some pupils into a system in which the evidence of progression within level A (particularly important for parents) was likely to be slight. The lack of guidance and support was a problem, especially for staff in special schools, who also seemed to feel a greater pressure to conform to the guidelines. One school had decided to withdraw a child from the programme, and to pursue a curriculum with the potential for progress. The 5-14 cluster groups designed to support mainstream and special schools could be threatened by local government reorganisation, as could the '5-14 parent prompts', introduced by the officer in authority H with a parental remit.

Devolved school management was welcomed by most as something which would improve the efficiency of SEN provision, through local decision making, increased cost effectiveness and better accountability. Coupled with local government reorganisation, however, the picture painted by officers and elected members began to be far less sanguine. They doubted the capacity of the new authorities (particularly the smaller ones) to sustain the commitment to special educational needs and maintain existing levels of provision, particularly if schools began to demand a higher level of devolution. Children without the protection of a Record of Needs were seen as likely to be at the greatest disadvantage.

4

PLACEMENTS OF PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Sources of data

This analysis of the patterns of placement of pupils with special educational needs drew on two main sources:

- statistics, provided by the Scottish Office Education Department
- telephone interviews with 37 regional officers throughout Scotland.

The statistics were derived from the annual census returns from special and mainstream schools. Most of the data covered the period from 1987 to 1992, although some earlier figures were also obtained. No figures were available for 1985 and 1986, because of industrial action. Information about staff and pupil numbers (including the number of recorded pupils) had been collected annually from all schools. Headteachers were also asked to provide more detailed information about the range of learning difficulties, types of teaching and the curriculum every two years. There were some differences between the forms completed by headteachers in different sectors, which limits opportunities to make comparisons. The special school data, which included special units and classes, contained details of the main kind of difficulty and the range of learning difficulties experienced by pupils. Primary and secondary school data, on the other hand, specified only the range of difficulties.

In the interviews, local authority officers were asked to comment on the current placement patterns within mainstream and special schools in their region and to say whether these had changed over the last five to ten years. They were also asked to speculate on future trends and on the factors which might affect these. In order to examine patterns of placement of pupils with special educational needs we will consider:

- placement of pupils in mainstream schools
- placement of pupils in special schools
- the nature of the population identified as having special educational needs.

Factors influencing the interpretation of placement figures

Even when working with official SOED figures, it is important to be cautious about their interpretation:

> The Government are (sic) very keen on amassing statistics. They collect them, add them, raise them to the nth power, take the cube root and prepare wonderful diagrams. But you must never forget that every one of these figures comes in the first instance from the village watchman, who just puts down what he damm pleases. (Sir Josiah Stamp, Inland Revenue Department, England 1896-1919).

While we would not offer quite such a dire warning, there were a number of limitations in the data with which we were working. Two factors made it difficult to obtain a clear picture of the precise numbers of children with special educational needs who at a given time were placed in mainstream schools. The first concerned the way in which the official SOED statistics were collected. The figures for mainstreamed children did not include those placed in special units or classes within mainstream schools, although they may spend large proportions of their time in mainstream classes. From the SOED's perspective there was a need to make a clear distinction to ensure accurate returns, but it was apparent from the interviews that regional officers regarded many such children as part of the mainstream population. The second difficulty concerned the variable patterns of recording across Scotland (see figure 9, p78). The statistics distinguished between children with and without a Record of Needs and included only the former in the figures for mainstreaming. Regions with traditionally low levels of recording were identified as having low proportions of mainstreamed children with a Record of Needs. However, because children without Records of Needs would not be included in the figures for mainstreaming, these regions might compare unfavourably with other regions with higher levels of recording, which are assumed to be integrating more children. It is important, therefore, to consider the proportion of pupils in both mainstream and special schools and to take account of regional recording patterns.

A variety of terminology is used within regions to describe placements of children who are neither wholly segregated in special school nor integrated in a mainstream class. Most of these terms refer to arrangements within mainstream schools, although the SOED count them as special placements:

- special departments
- special units
- special classes
- SEN bases

- learning centres
- extended learning support facilities.

It is not possible to distinguish unambiguously among these terms, as regions appeared to interpret them in different ways. There also may be differences among schools in their use and individual children may spend varying amounts of time in them. In general, they are separate provisions within mainstream schools which are the loci for the teaching of small groups or administering of specialist support, for example physiotherapy. Pupils with SEN may move from the base to join mainstream classes for particular subjects or may be mainstreamed as a homogeneous group.

Even if there is confidence in the figures obtained, the picture is not necessarily stable. Changes in the population in special schools might be affected by a number of factors:

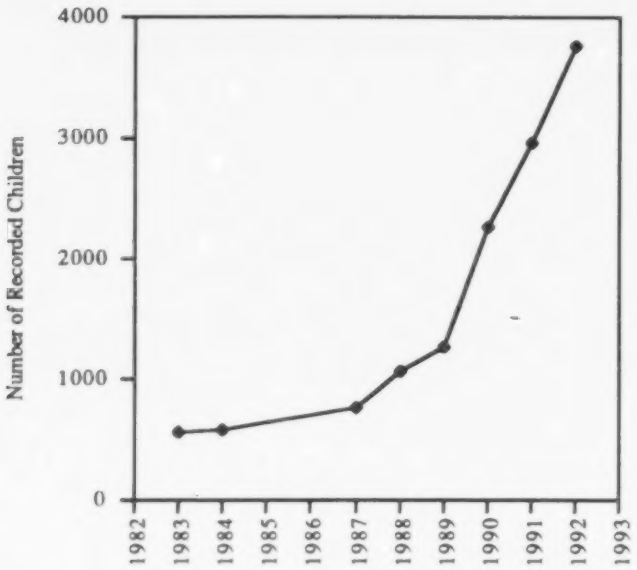
- demographic changes
- reforms in regional policies for special educational needs
- movement of pupils from other provisions, for example hospital schools, residential placements or List 'D' schools into special schools
- changes in the proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs
- varying parental choice.

As well as the shifting base of provision, it is important to be aware of changes in the population identified as having difficulties. It seems likely, for example, that higher proportions have been identified as infant survival rates increase. There may also have been changes in the kinds of difficulties pupils experience. These changes may be reflected in the patterns of recording and the nature of the difficulties reported.

Mainstream placements of recorded children in Scotland

Before looking at regional patterns of mainstream placements, it is important to consider the overall trend in Scotland. Figure 1 shows the increase in the numbers of recorded children placed in mainstream schools since 1983. This was the first year figures were available for children for whom a Record of Needs was opened under the terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (as amended). Given that the population of pupils within special schools has remained relatively stable during this period, the overall trend seems to have been one of an increase in the **recording** of pupils within mainstream schools.

Figure 1: Number of Recorded Children in Mainstream Schools

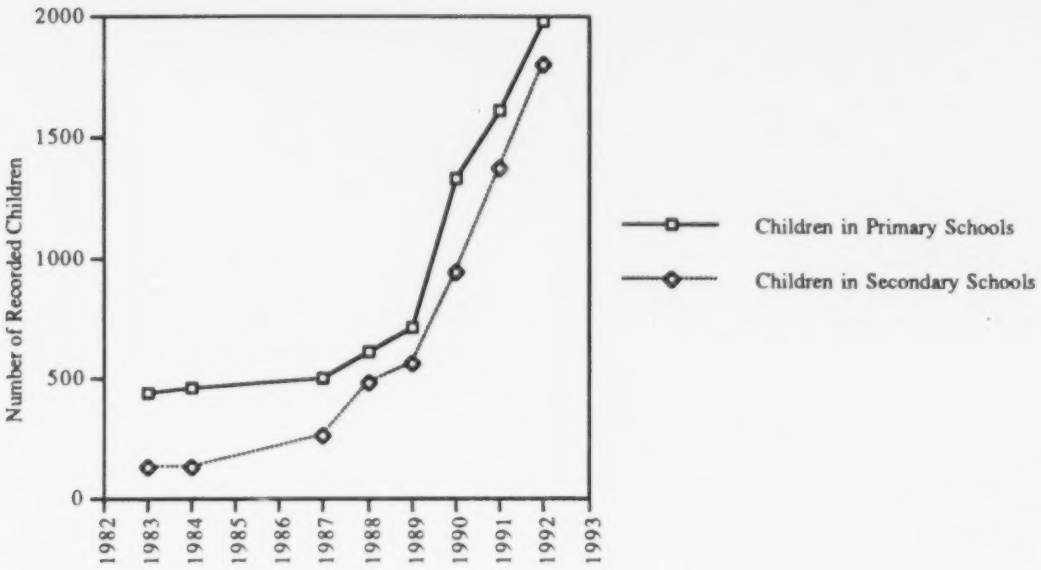


No figures were available for 1985 and 1986

The **proportion** of pupils in mainstream schools with a Record of Needs increased from 0.07% in 1983 to 0.56% in 1992.

Figure 2 compares the changes in the numbers of recorded children in primary and secondary schools.

Figure 2: Recorded Children in Primary and Secondary Mainstream Schools



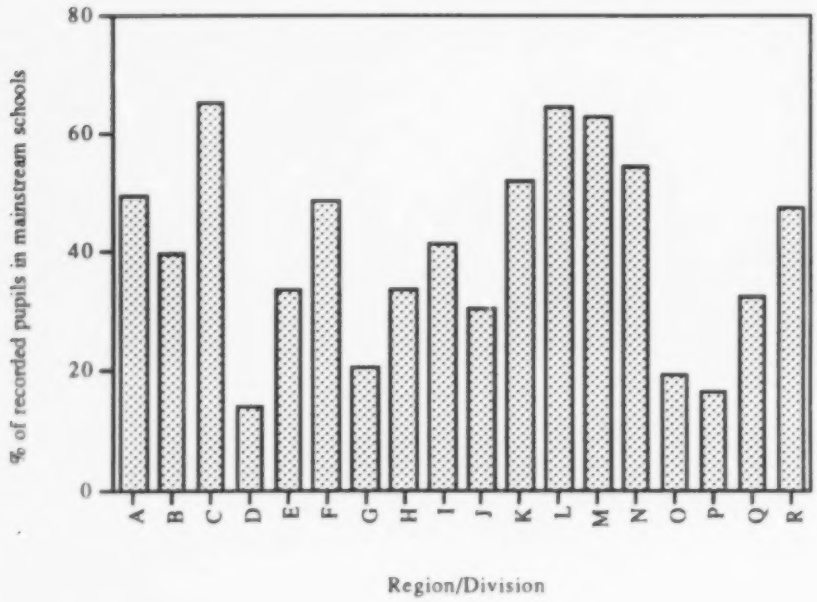
No figures were available for 1985 and 1986

The pattern of increase in the numbers of recorded children in primary and secondary schools has been roughly similar, but the gap between primary and secondary schools narrowed by 120 between 1983 and 1992. The proportion of children in primary schools with a Record of Needs rose from 0.1% in 1983 to 0.45% in 1992. In the secondary sector, the proportion of recorded pupils increased from 0.03% in 1983 to 0.59% in 1992. The figures suggest that the increase in recorded children in mainstream schools was greater in secondary than in primary, possibly through greater recording activity within the former.

Mainstream placements of recorded children in the Scottish regions

Figure 3 compares the proportions of recorded pupils in mainstream schools in each region and division for the year 1991, taken from the SOED statistical bulletin (1992). Where proportions are given, the raw data are contained in Appendix C.

Figure 3: Proportions of Recorded Pupils in Mainstream Schools: Regional and Divisional Comparisons in 1991



Note: M, N, O, P, Q and R are divisions within region H.

The highest proportions of recorded pupils in mainstream schools were 65.1%, 64.5%, 62.7% and 54.2% (C, L, M and N). These regions and divisions are all predominantly rural and it may be impractical to transport children to centralised special school or unit provision. One region has the added distinctiveness of having had a policy of integration since 1983.

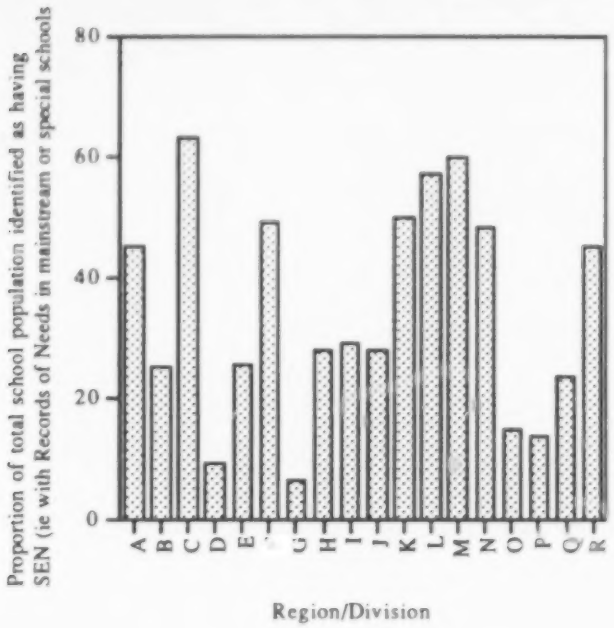
The lowest proportions of recorded pupils in mainstream schools in 1991 were 14.5% 16.6%, 19.3% and 20.5% (D, P, O and G). Each of these regions and divisions have a long tradition of special school provision. Such traditions take time to change, even where there is an expressed commitment to integration. Historically, two of these regions have also had low levels of recording. It is possible that parents of non-recorded children in these regions did not have the same opportunities to influence placements as parents of recorded children, for instance through the procedures leading to the opening of a Record of Needs.

The regional officers were asked to comment on the accuracy of the statistics underlying Figure 3 prior to discussion of patterns of placement patterns in mainstream schools over the last five to ten years. Most of the officers interviewed (27) thought the figures were accurate for their region. Seven said that the percentage

was higher than expected but suggested that schools may have included children who were in units or in the process of being recorded. Three said the percentage was lower than expected, but offered no reasons for the discrepancy.

Figure 3 does not take account of the children who did **not** have a Record of Needs and who were in **special** schools (30.5% of the special school population in 1992). Figure 4 takes account of recorded children in both special and mainstream schools and children in special schools who were not recorded, for whatever reasons, in 1991. It does not include pupils in mainstream schools, whose teachers might consider them to require a Record of Needs.

Figure 4: Proportion of Total School Population With Either a Record of Needs in Mainstream or in Special School Placement: Regional and Divisional Comparisons in 1991

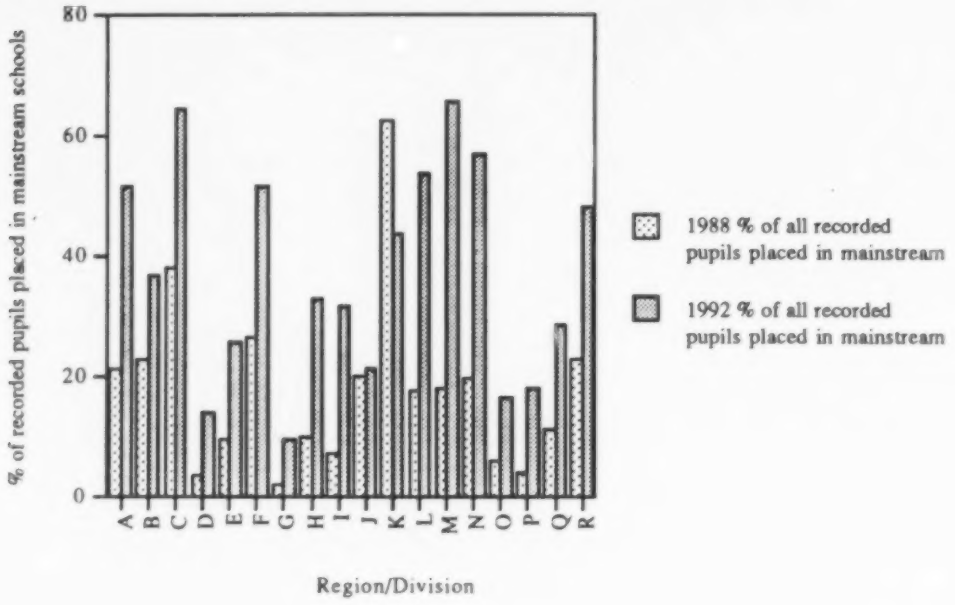


Note: M, N, O, P, Q and R are divisions within region H.

In the majority of regions, the proportions of children mainstreamed were reduced only slightly by taking into account the non-recorded pupils in special schools. Three regions, however, appeared to place a lower proportion of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools, when those without Records of Needs were included in the analyses. When the non-recorded special school population was included, the differences in the proportions mainstreamed were 14.6%, 14.1% and 12.3% (B, G and I).

It is important also to note the changes in the proportions of pupils with Records of Needs placed in mainstream schools between 1988 and 1992. Figure 5 compares the proportions of mainstream placements of recorded pupils between 1988 and 1992.

Figure 5: Proportion of Recorded Pupils Placed in Mainstream Schools in 1988 and 1992


80
60
40
20
0
% of recorded pupils placed in mainstream schools
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R
Region/Division
1988 % of all recorded pupils placed in mainstream
1992 % of all recorded pupils placed in mainstream

Note: M, N, O, P, Q and R are divisions within region H.

The increases may have occurred, of course, either as a result of decisions to place children with Records of Needs in mainstream schools or from a higher incidence of recording of pupils in mainstream schools. In 1988 the regions or divisions with the largest proportions of recorded pupils in mainstream (not including the island authorities, J, K and L, because of their small numbers) were B, C, F and R. In 1992, A, C, F, N and M were highest. Low mainstreaming regions or divisions in both 1988 and 1992 were D, G, O and P.

It is interesting to examine the high and low mainstreaming regions in relation to their policies on special educational needs. Two of the regions or divisions with high levels of mainstreaming had policy statements advocating mainstream placements, while three supported the least restrictive environment. Region A, which had a high level of mainstreaming in 1992, had a policy statement which recommended appropriate education, a phrase which appeared to offer the least positive endorsement of mainstreaming. Two regions or divisions with small proportions of recorded children in mainstream schools had statements favouring both

mainstreaming and appropriate education. The other two mentioned the least restrictive environment in their policies, a statement generally supportive of mainstreaming.

Table 4.1 indicates the education authority officers' impressions of the overall pattern of mainstream placements during the last 5-10 years. The majority of respondents commented on the numbers of children with special educational needs rather than proportions, although they were asked about both. With one exception, they viewed the picture as one of recorded pupils moving into mainstream.

Table 4.1: EA Personnel's Perceptions of Regional Mainstreaming Patterns

Mainstream Placements	Directorate Officials	Advisers (SEN)	Educational Psych-ologists	Total
Increased and continuing to rise	13	8	6	27
Increased, but figures now stable	5	-	4	9
Unsure	-		1	1

The psychologist who was unsure about the patterns of mainstreaming gave the following explanation:

> Most authorities have widened the constituency of special needs and the ghost of objectivity is stalking through. More children are being construed as having behavioural difficulties. Teachers are identifying more children with special needs of a much wider variety and there is a shift in nomenclature. That could give the impression of more mainstreaming, but I'm sceptical of that being the case.

Several individuals commented on what they saw as an 'ability drift' of the population of children with special educational needs from special into mainstream schools. This was marked by an increased number of children with moderate learning difficulties in mainstream schools. The majority of children with difficulties of this kind were likely to have been placed in special schools in the past. Increases in the numbers of children with special educational needs placed in mainstream schools were attributed to three main factors:

- regional policy
- the influence of parents
- increases in the size of the population identified as having special educational needs.

In one region, children who were already in mainstream schools at the time of the implementation of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1980 (as amended) were being recorded as part of a process of 'catching up'. Nine officers from eight regions or divisions identified a levelling of the numbers of recorded pupils in mainstream. This was stated by five directorate officials and four educational psychologists, whose responsibilities for the placement of children may have made them more aware of recent changes in those placements than the advisers.

These individuals cited the influence of parents on the figures and on placements. Segregation was reported to be favoured by many parents and regional policy was described as evolving to ensure parents had choice. An educational psychologist commented:

> Our policy is not about driving forward ideologically towards integration, but giving parents choice of one or the other. The policy does mention mainstreaming where possible, but if parents are not wearing it we will continue to have other alternatives.

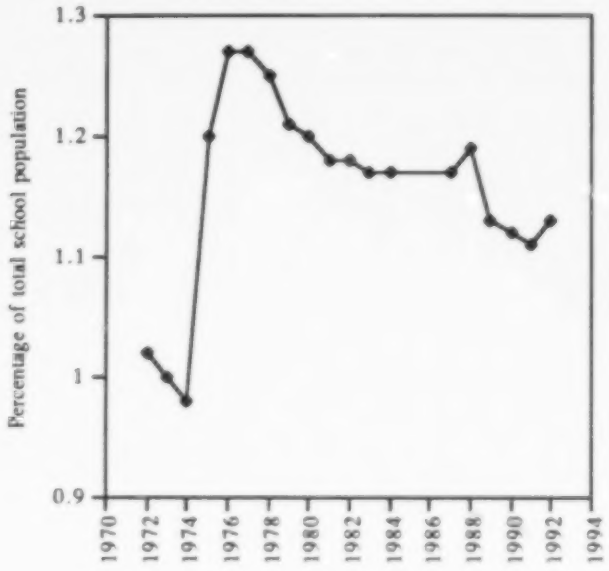
Concern about the escalating costs of individual mainstream placements, however, was another factor which officers in one region suggested had slowed the rate of mainstreaming. The tensions between local authority policies, parental choice and financial management are explored in Chapter 3.

Special school placements in Scotland

An examination of the patterns of placement in special schools is important in adding to the picture obtained by analysing mainstreaming placement patterns. Authorities may place pupils in grant-aided or independent schools. We did not include these figures in our analysis, but it is important to be aware of the distinctions. Grant-aided schools (eg Donaldsons and the Royal Blind School) are financed through a Scottish Office grant and fees from local authorities who place children there. Independent schools (eg Camphill and Falkland House School). The use of grant-aided and independent schools is of interest and is returned to later in this chapter.

Overall, the numbers of children in Education Authority special schools have been declining since 1976. Between 1976 and 1990, the EA special school population fell by 41.6%. The school population as a whole declined by 27.7% during that period. Since 1991, there has been a slight upturn in the number of children in EA special schools, as figure 6 illustrates.

Figure 6: Proportion of Total School Population Placed in EA Special Schools

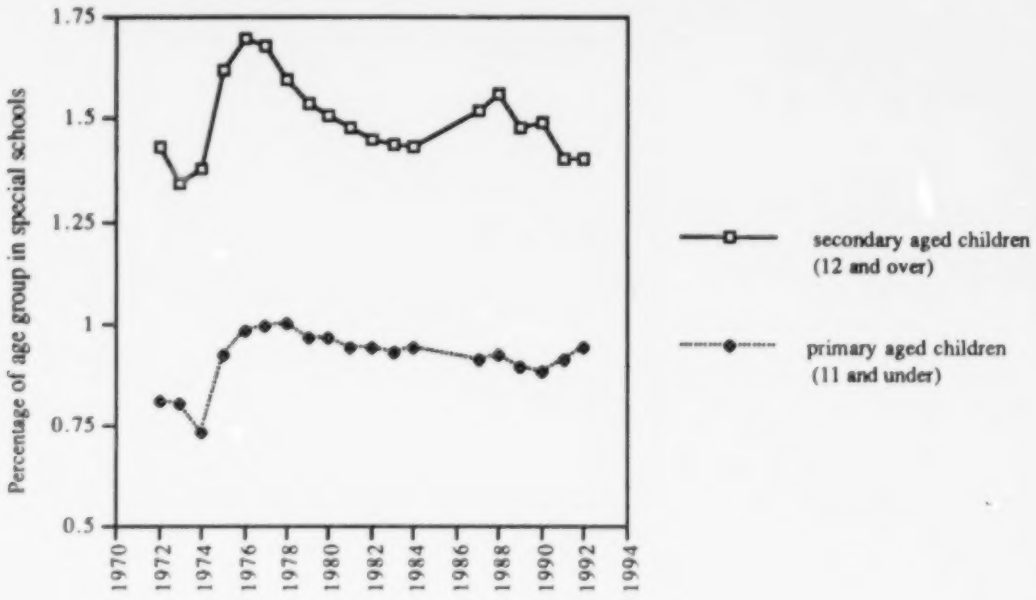


No figures were available for 1985 and 1986

Mackay (1993) suggests that the increase in the proportion of children placed in EA special schools between 1974 and 1978 can be explained by the inclusion of children with profound learning difficulties in the statistics from 1976 onwards. This followed the implementation of the Education (Mentally Handicapped Children) (Scotland) Act, 1974, incorporating children who previously attended local authority day care centres within special education provision. He attributes the second rise, around the period 1984-1988, to the movement of children from List 'D' schools (which became independent special schools) into EA special schools. Accurate returns for this period are unavailable, but the 1988 figures clearly indicate that a rise took place.

Figure 7 compares the placement of primary and secondary aged pupils in special schools.

Figure 7: Proportions of Primary and Secondary Aged Pupils in EA Special Schools



No figures were available for 1985 and 1986

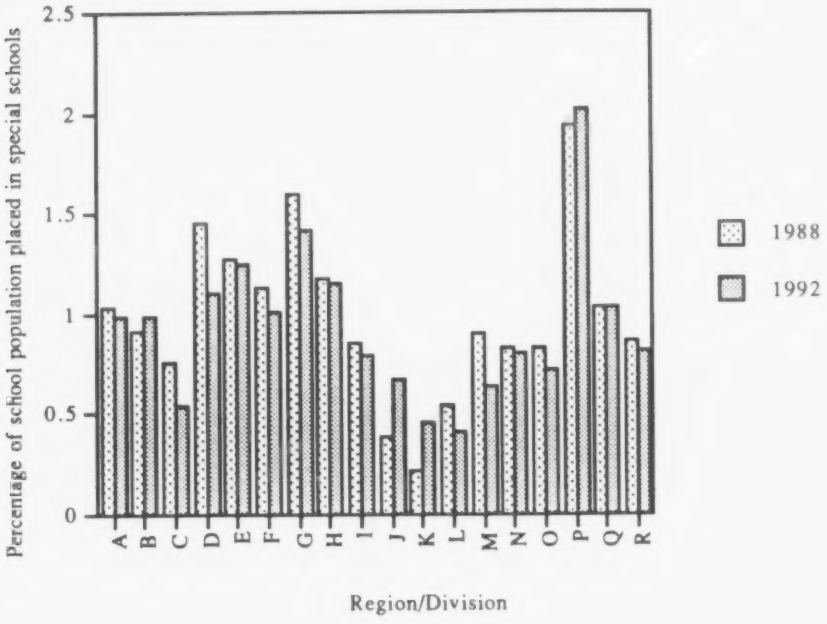
A higher proportion of secondary than primary age pupils were placed in EA special schools. There might well be an optimism among staff that primary aged pupils could be helped to overcome their difficulties within the primary school, for instance with intensive help in reading. Such optimism might diminish once children reach secondary age and could be replaced by a perception that specialised provision is more appropriate. There were roughly equal increases in the proportions of both groups in special schools between 1974 and 1978. Since then, however, the patterns have differed. The proportion of primary aged children in special schools has remained much more constant than the proportion of secondary aged children. During the early eighties, there appears to have been a marked decline in the percentage of secondary aged pupils placed in special schools. It is difficult to say whether this indicates greater integration during this period or merely reflects general demographic patterns of more children moving out of the special school system beyond the age of sixteen than numbers moving in. Mackay (1993), however, claims that the proportion of the population in the 16+ age group placed in special schools has increased. The movement of children from List 'D' schools into special schools is likely to have involved mainly children aged eleven and over. The Scottish Office Statistical Bulletin (1992) attributes this to fluctuations in the figures for secondary aged pupils around 1984-88, compared with the more stable pattern of pupils under

the age of eleven. The slight increase in the proportion of children in special schools from 1991 to 1993, indicated in figure 6, appears from figure 7 to have been greater among primary aged children.

Special school placements in the Scottish regions

Figure 8 compares the change in the EA special school population within each region and division between 1988 and 1992.

Figure 8: Proportions of School Population Placed in EA Special Schools in 1988 and 1992



Note: M, N, O, P, Q and R are divisions within region H.

In 1988, the highest proportions of children in special schools (excluding the island authorities) were 1.94%, 1.6%, 1.46% and 1.28% (P, G, D, and E). Three of these regions continued to segregate the highest proportions in 1992 (2.02%, 1.42% and 1.25%), although two of them showed a decrease in proportion during the period. The proportions increased slightly during the period in three regions or divisions (B, P and Q). In the other cases, however, the proportions of segregated placements declined during the five year period.

Variations in the proportions of pupils placed in grant-aided or independent schools are illustrated in table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Placement of Pupils in Grant-aided or Independent Schools:

Education Authority	Proportion of all pupils placed in special schools
Borders	11
Central	14
Dumfries & Galloway	20
Fife	7
Grampian	17
Highland	10
Lothian	30
Strathclyde	14
Tayside	15
Orkney	10
Shetland	27
Western Isles	5

These figures were supplied by the SOED, who drew attention to the significant proportions of grant-aided and independent special school placements by some authorities. Our analysis, however, has been confined to EA special schools.

Education authority special school placements can, like the mainstream placements, be examined in relation to their policy statements. The regions and divisions with the highest levels of special school placements in both 1988 and 1992 (excluding the island authorities) were D, E, G and P. Two of the regions had policy statements advocating mainstreaming and appropriate provision and one supported the least restrictive environment. Region E had a policy recommending mainstreaming. Lowest levels of placements in 1988 were C, I, M and O and in 1992 were C, I and M. Two of the policy statements referred to the least restrictive environment and one to mainstreaming. Region I had the most cautious policy statement advocating appropriate provision.

Examining the figures for placements in mainstream and special schools alongside the region's policies provided some surprises. One might have anticipated that regions with active endorsement of mainstreaming would have had correspondingly high use of mainstream and low use of special schools. Similarly regions with policy statements preferring to recommend appropriate placements might have expected to

make significant use of special schools and to integrate relatively small proportions of recorded pupils. The picture is a more complex one and is summarised in table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Policy Statements of Regions with High and Low Levels of Mainstream and Special School Placements in 1992

Policy	Region/division	Placement in mainstream	Placement in special
1. Mainstreaming where possible	C	High	Low
	E		High
	F	High	
2. Least restrictive educational environment	M	High	Low
	N	High	
	O	Low	
	P	Low	
3. Mainstreaming/ appropriate education	D	Low	High
	G	Low	High
4. Appropriate education	I		Low

Note: M, N, O and P are divisions within region H.

The regions in which the relationship between policy and placement in mainstream and special schools appears to be closest are C, M, D and G. Regions C and M both place high proportions of recorded children in mainstream and make relatively few special school placements. Region C recommends mainstream placements in its policy document and a less direct, but nevertheless positive, statement about mainstreaming is made by Region M. Regions D and G make cautious policy statements, supporting both mainstreaming and appropriate education, and this is reflected in the low proportions of recorded pupils placed in mainstream schools and the high levels of special school placements.

Perhaps the most surprising regions are E and I, whose high and low levels of placements in special schools do not reflect their policy statements. Region E recommends mainstreaming where possible, yet places relatively large proportions of children in special schools. It may take some regions longer than others to move children from special into mainstream schools, particularly if city special schools remain an attractive option to parents. Our case study work in this region suggests that this has happened (see Chapter 3). In contrast, Region I has a low level of special

school placements, but its policy statement is the least emphatic about mainstream provision. This region could be interpreting appropriate education as mainstream placements for the majority of children.

Education authority personnel described the trends in special school placements variously, as table 4.4 illustrates.

Table 4.4: EA Personnel's Perceptions of Regional Patterns of Special School Placement

Special School Placements	Directorate Officials	Advisers (SEN)	Educational Psyche-ologists	Total
Rolls have remained stable	10	2	5	**17**
Rolls have increased	4	4	1	**9**
Rolls have decreased	1	-	2	**3**
No special schools in region	3	2	3	**8**

Of those regions or divisions with special schools, seventeen of the officers interviewed (from eleven regions or divisions) said that the special school rolls had remained relatively static over the last five to ten years and nine individuals (from six regions) suggested they had increased. Only three officers (from different regions or divisions) perceived a decrease in special school rolls.

The exercise of choice of parents was reported as an important factor in sustaining or increasing special school rolls. Regional policies on integration had a strong emphasis on extending parental choice and providing education in 'appropriate' settings. An adviser reported a typical pattern:

> Certainly the region is committed to making provision available in mainstream, but we are also moving towards more specialised provision. We're not hung up on an integration-segregation debate.

It was mentioned earlier in this paper that some officers saw concerns about costs as braking trends towards full mainstreaming. These concerns, particularly about the high costs of special needs auxiliaries, had encouraged authorities to consider more centralised forms of provision, such as special units or SEN bases. These would count as segregated placements in the official SOED figures.

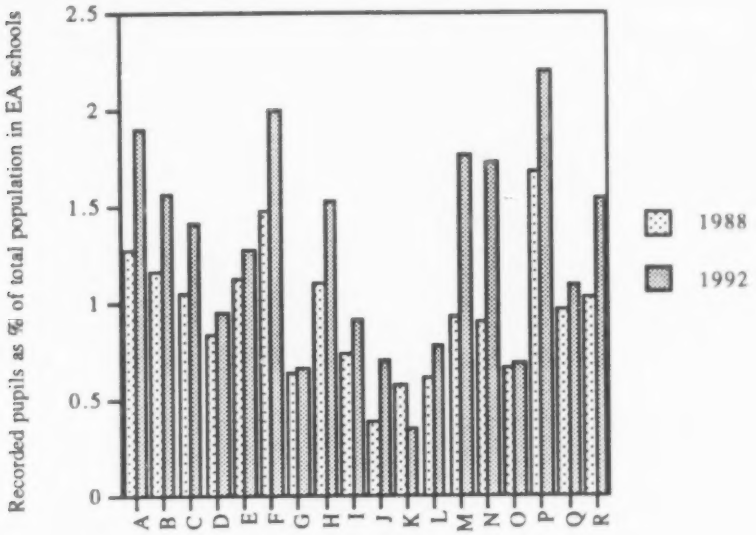
Several officers thought there were higher proportions of pupils of secondary age in special schools than of primary age. They said pupils were often able to cope with mainstreaming up to the age of eleven and most parents wished their child to be educated locally. Secondary schools were seen as more demanding and parents placed less importance on their child attending the local school than they might have done when the child was younger. It was often at the transition stage that children were placed in a special school. A few individuals mentioned children being moved from special to mainstream schools. In two authorities there were said to be more children of primary than secondary age in special schools, particularly those with language and communication difficulties. There was a deliberate placement policy for children in these regions, aimed at equipping them for mainstream education at a later date.

The most significant change in the special school population, according to regional officers, related, not to its size, but to the nature of the difficulties experienced by the pupils. The 'ability drift' of children with special educational needs into mainstream schools had also affected the special school population. This related to children who would not previously be considered able to cope within mainstream schools, such as those with Down's syndrome, being placed there. We turn now to the changes in the nature of the population of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream and special schools.

The characteristics of pupils with Records of Needs

In 1993, there were 11,465 pupils with a Record of Needs in education authority, grant maintained and independent schools (1.4% of total school population). This number had increased by 1094 from 1992. Figure 9 illustrates variations between regions in the proportion of recorded pupils in education authority schools (mainstream and special) between 1988 and 1992.

Figure 9: Proportions of School Population with a Record of Needs in 1988 and 1992



Note: M, N, O, P, Q and R are divisions within region H.

The highest proportions of recorded pupils in 1988 were 1.68%, 1.48%, 1.28% and 1.16% (P, F, A and B). Three of these regions continued to have the highest proportions in 1992 2.2%, 2% and 1.9% (P, F and A). In all regions (excluding the islands) the proportion of pupils in education authority schools with a Record of Needs increased between 1988 and 1992.

Of the 29 officers who were asked about recording levels, 18 (eight directorate officials and ten principal educational psychologists from 13 regions or divisions) said their impression was that the total number of pupils being recorded within their own region had increased. Advisers were not asked about recording. Increases in the number of Records of Needs opened for children with specific learning difficulties were reported by four educational psychologists. Two educational psychologists and one directorate official (from regions B, D and E) said that more children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties were being recorded. Four directorate officials mentioned traditionally low levels of recording in their region or division (D, J, L and O) which were unlikely to change. In one region there was disagreement among officials over this:

> We seem to be recording fewer than the national average. This is a bone of contention between me and the psychologists, who come wanting resources without a record. I say if they record, certain things would be provided automatically. They see the process as time-consuming and tend to record only those with physical or

> mental problems. They don't record slow learners or disruptive behaviour, but I have been trying to move them towards recording if they want access to the 2nd tier of funding [available for children with a Record of Needs].

Two regions were said to have high recording levels by a directorate member, an educational psychologist and an adviser (F and N). One officer commented:

> We expect to be done over about this [by elected members], but not by the SOED. They appear to approve and think we are operating the legislation correctly. However, there are concerns about the time demands.

A decrease in the rate of recording in either region was thought unlikely. The remaining respondents made no comment on the recording patterns in their regions or divisions.

A variety of reasons was suggested for the increase in the number of Records of Needs being opened. Parents, voluntary organisations and headteachers were said to be placing greater pressure on education authorities to record children. This seemed to be driven by a perception of a Record of Need as a key to resources. There were also changes in the recording practices within regions, which were identified as influential. These included:

- recording children at an earlier age
- including children with a particular kind of difficulty who previously would not have been recorded
- recording more children on the 'borderline'
- addressing historical imbalances in recording
- applying different criteria for recording.

Recording was seen as an increasingly important 'safety net' for children, particularly those placed in mainstream schools. Five individuals suggested that the increase in the number of recorded pupils had arisen from a greater incidence of special educational need, for instance through improved survival rates of children due to medical advances. This was confirmed by a consultant community paediatrician with experience in two local authorities.

The issue of recording was one which education authority officers said was causing considerable concern for three main reasons. The first relates to the criteria for deciding whether or not to open a Record of Need. Officers were critical of the lack

of any clear guidelines on recording from SOED, but in the absence of these, attempts had been made to review regional procedures and to establish clearer criteria. This was seen as particularly important where there were variations in recording levels within regions. The second source of concern arose from the increases in the number of Records of Needs being opened. This was thought likely to escalate further with the introduction of DSM, where it might be necessary to separate funding for special educational needs from the schools' general budgets. Regional officers, especially the educational psychologists, faced an enormous administrative burden and they found it difficult to envisage coping with further increases in the numbers of Records of Needs being opened. Concern over the administrative burden imposed by Records of Needs was also documented in 1985, when the numbers of recorded children were considerably smaller (Thomson et al, 1985).

Several individuals saw the increased importance being placed on Records of Needs as undermining the notion of a continuum of need, which they tried to advocate. An educational psychologist made the following comment:

> I'm supportive of the continuum, but I think the recording process has been unhelpful in this respect, because it focuses attention on the lowest 2%.

Although there were other threats to the concept of a continuum, associated with the perceived usefulness of categories in certain contexts, the greater emphasis on recording children risked creating an artificial distinction between those with and without a Record of Needs.

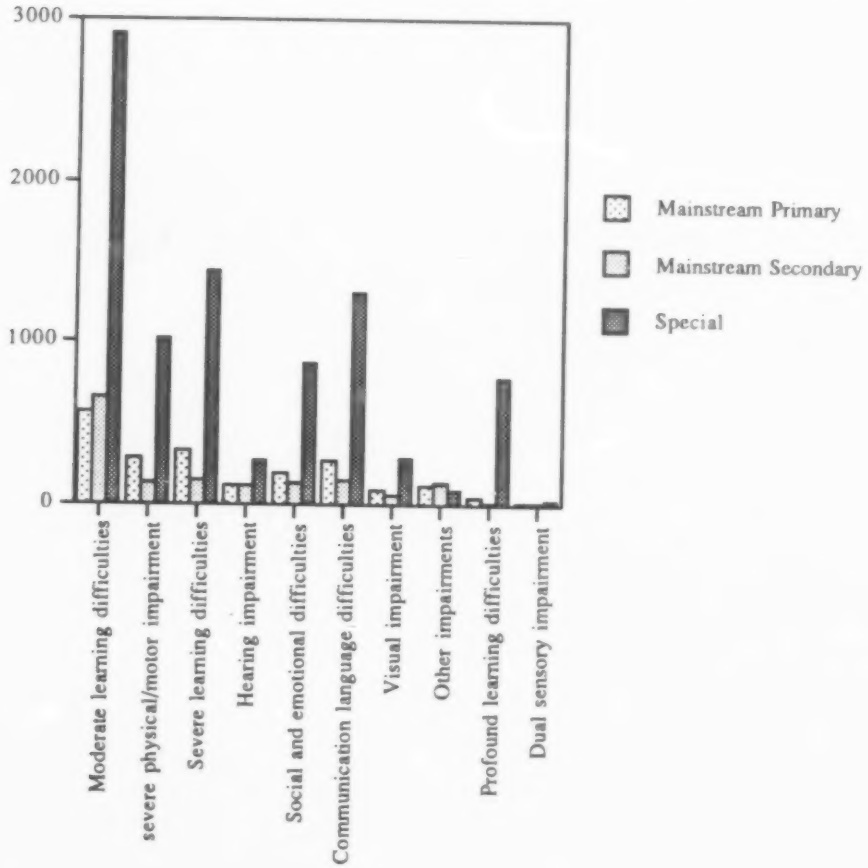
The changing pattern of placement of pupils with recorded special educational needs of different kinds had the following features:

- increased numbers of children with moderate learning difficulties were in mainstream schools (there during their entire school career or moving from special schools)
- children with severe or profound learning difficulties remained in special schools
- children with the most severe or profound learning difficulties were moved into special schools from, for example, hospital schools
- children with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties (formerly in List 'D' schools) were placed in special schools and those with less severe difficulties of this kind remained in mainstream schools.

Mainstream schools were reported to have more children with special educational needs, some of which were described as 'complex'. This complexity, according to staff, might arise from the severity of the difficulty or by the presence of more than one difficulty within a child. Special schools were likely to have children whose learning difficulties were severe or profound and who might have multiple difficulties. However, they might also have had on roll pupils with moderate learning difficulties, either through parental choice or because no decision had been taken to move them into mainstream, and increasing numbers of children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The wide range of difficulties encountered by staff in special schools heightened the demands on them. There were particular difficulties in providing a broad and balanced curriculum, appropriate for all pupils.

Figure 10 compares the range of difficulties experienced by pupils in primary, secondary and special schools, reported in the census returns. Pupils with multiple difficulties may be counted more than once.

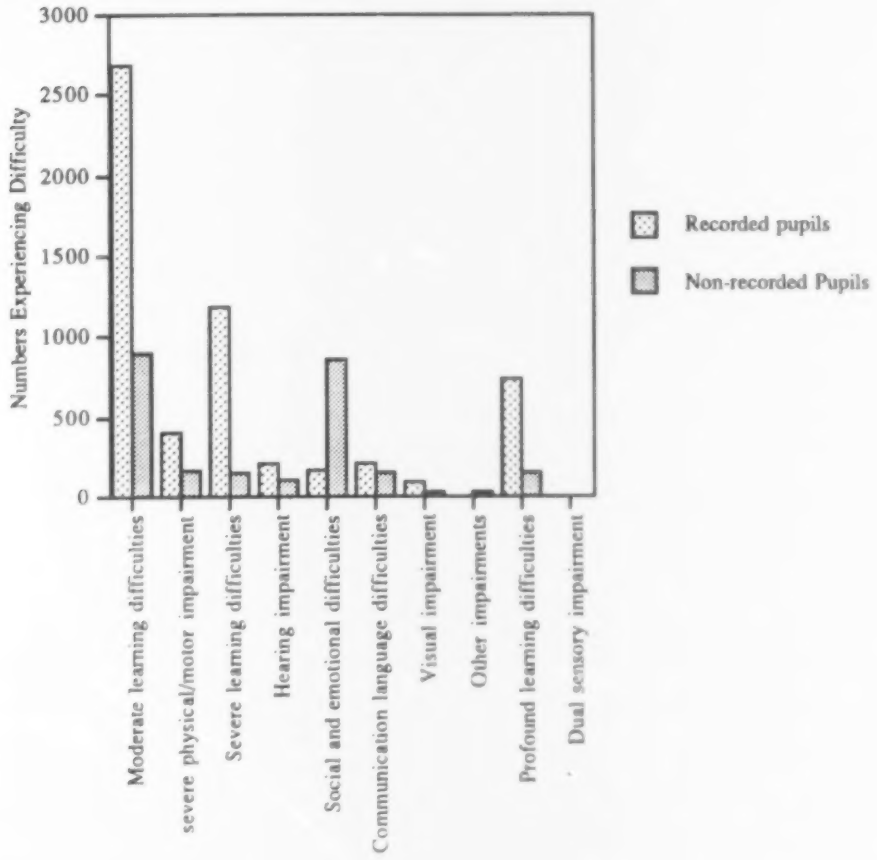
Figure 10: Range of Difficulties Experienced By Recorded Pupils



Despite the shift in the population described by the education authority personnel, moderate learning difficulties were still the most prevalent category within the special school population in 1991. Children with moderate learning difficulties may have had additional difficulties, such as physical/motor impairment or social and emotional difficulties, which may account for their placement in a special school. This last category presumably also includes pupils with behavioural difficulties. It is unclear from figure 10 how many had multiple difficulties, but research by Thomson, Riddell and Dyer (1990) revealed that 64.5% of children with Records of Needs were identified as having more than one difficulty. Severe learning difficulties and communication and language disorders were experienced by a large proportion of the special school population, as were social and emotional difficulties and severe physical or motor impairment. There were some interesting differences between the range of difficulties of primary and secondary aged pupils. A higher proportion of primary aged pupils experienced severe learning difficulties, physical or motor impairment, language and communication disorders or social and emotional difficulties than those in secondary. This is supported by the interview data in which officers reported placing children with difficulties of the kind described above in their local school until they reached secondary age, then moving them to a segregated placement. In two authorities, however, the reverse was reported: primary aged children, particularly those experiencing language and communication disorders, were placed in special schools, with the aim of preparing them for a mainstream placement as they reached secondary age.

Returns were collected from special schools on the main area of difficulty experienced by recorded and non-recorded pupils in 1991. These are given in figure 11.

Figure 11: Main Area of Difficulty Experienced by Pupils in Special Schools



The non-recorded population in special schools included large proportions of pupils experiencing moderate learning difficulties and/or social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. Several individuals commented on explicit policy within their region not to record children with SEBD. It was less clear why children with other kinds of difficulties had not been recorded, including those with moderate learning difficulties, but particularly those with severe and profound learning difficulties or severe physical or motor impairment. These children might be expected to have needs which were long term and required continuing review, but there are a variety of reasons why they might not be recorded. Parents might object to the opening of a Record of Needs or recording a terminally ill child might be viewed as insensitive. Children could have been in the process of being recorded or might have been placed initially in special schools without a Record of Needs, with no advantage seen in recording them at a later stage. Several officers suggested that children often fell into the latter category and commented that they saw recording as potentially more important for children in

mainstream, as a means of ensuring their needs were met[1] . It is difficult to envisage how the placement of a child is reviewed if he or she does not have a Record of Needs.

Future trends

Education authority personnel found it difficult to make clear predictions about the placement of children with special educational needs over the next five to ten years. Several uncertainties lay ahead, the most important of which were:

- the introduction of devolved school management schemes
- the increasing costs of special education provision and drives to improve cost effectiveness
- reform of local government.

At the time of the interviews, schemes for devolved management were being discussed and education authority personnel could only surmise how these might affect special educational needs provision. Efforts were being made, however, to introduce schemes which would safeguard the interest of children with special educational needs. Plans for the reform of local government had not been announced when the interviews took place and officers were uneasy about the implications for special educational needs provision. Their main concern was the threat to services which might be posed by the introduction of smaller authorities. The case studies of the two education authorities produced a more detailed picture of the future, from their experience of the reforms so far (see Chapter 3).

Summary

This chapter starts with a general caution about the interpretation of what look like 'objective' measures of placements of children with SEN in special or mainstream schools. It would be unwise, therefore, to assume that SOED statistics provide the hard, immutable data and that data from education authority officers is just subjective opinion. Both sources have their strengths and limitations.

Scrutiny of regional policies and the responses of education authority personnel display a variety of views of how integration (in the sense of the locus of the child's education) should proceed. While the numbers of informants are too small to draw firm conclusions, the findings could offer hypotheses to be tested in the future ie (i)

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[1] Responding to these speculations, the SOED commented that 'It was or is the view of some educational psychologists that "if pupils are already in special schools then why do they need a record of needs?"' (SOED, 16 August 1995).

educational psychologists are more favourably inclined towards integration into mainstream settings than are SEN Advisers and (ii) the general education authority view favours the retention of both mainstream **and** special school provision. The picture of policy is evolving, however, with parental choice and the costs of different kinds of provision central to the decision making.

Over the last decade in Scotland generally there has been an 8-fold increase in the proportion of children in mainstream schools who have a Record of Needs, and this increase appears to have been greater in the secondary sector. However, the proportion of recorded children in mainstream schools shows considerable variation among regions from less than 15% to more than 65%. Factors which seem important are geographical location (rural areas display higher proportions), early/late 'conversion' to policies for integration, different degrees of emphasis on integration within policies and long traditions of special school provision and of low levels of recording. There have been, nonetheless, increases in the proportion of recorded pupils placed in mainstream schools in all but one of the regions and divisions, and some of these increases have been substantial. This accords with the views of almost all the education authority personnel interviewed. In a few exceptions recording was **not** seen as important or relevant to the allocation of resources. This, however, seems to be a view which may be difficult to sustain within authorities if there is pressure, for example from schools and parents, to record.

In the decade and a half to 1990, the special school population fell by nearly 60% in comparison with the general school population which declined by less than 30%. Since 1991 there has been a slight upturn. The proportions of segregated placements in most education authorities has declined over the last five years but not dramatically. Those interviewed, indeed, largely perceived the special school rolls as having remained stable or even as increasing, especially in the secondary sector where parents were said to place less importance on attendance at the local mainstream school.

Recording practices were clearly seen as changing. Children were being recorded at an earlier age; problems such as specific learning difficulties or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties were likely to be cited more frequently; parents and voluntary organisations were pressing harder for Records of Needs; more concern was being expressed about safety nets for borderline cases; and devolved school management was likely to encourage schools to look for higher rates of recording. Anxiety was expressed about variability among (and even within) authorities, inadequate guidance on criteria, the administrative burden of exploding demand and the danger of a

dichotomy of 'those with' and 'those without' a Record providing a challenge to the concept of a **continuum** of special needs.

The perceived changes in the mainstream school population included increasing numbers of children with moderate learning difficulties, multiple difficulties and social, emotional or behavioural difficulties (perhaps of a more severe kind). Changes in the special school population included increasing numbers of children with the most severe and profound difficulties, major multiple difficulties and the most severe social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. In both special and mainstream sectors, therefore, demands on teachers were seen as increasing.

5
THE FUNDING OF SEN PROVISION IN MAINSTREAM AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Introduction

Questions about the funding of special educational needs provision were asked mainly of the directorate officials, who were expected to be most fully involved with financial planning and management. In each of the regions directorate officials, educational psychologists and SEN advisers were asked to make comparisons of the costs of mainstream and special schools in their region. They were also asked to describe the region's plans for devolved management and to speculate on the likely effects on SEN provision. Case studies of two education authorities provided an opportunity to focus in greater detail on aspects of the costs of special educational needs provision and devolved school management. Some of the case study schools within these authorities were already operating with devolved budgets and headteachers commented on their early experiences.

General budgeting practice

Education officers were asked to describe the existing arrangements for the funding of special educational needs, prior to the introduction of devolved school management (DSM) schemes. They described, in general terms, how decisions were reached about funding, on what these were based and the elements included in SEN budgets. Their perceptions of the adequacy of these arrangements are of particular interest.

The picture painted of funding for special educational needs by regional officials was one which was driven largely by the needs of individual children. Several directorate officials commented on the importance of the support from elected members for special educational needs:

> They see SEN youngsters as the most disadvantaged in society and so the policy, which is based on equal opportunities is seen as a good thing by them in their hearts and their heads. That's been capitalised on by achieving a position where SEN will not suffer cuts. . . We have also achieved permission to retain revenue from special school closures to be recycled into SEN provision.

Officers voiced their concern over the capacity of their region to fund provision for continually rising numbers of children with special educational needs. Disquiet was expressed also about the inefficiency with which some special schools (small schools with high unit costs) were operating. There was broad agreement among the directorate officials over the need for greater 'managerial' and 'financial rigour' and criticism of the

lack of guidance for regions from the SOED on how to achieve this. DSM was seen as likely to introduce greater accountability and control of resources:

> Devolved management is not about money, it's about responsibilities, contracts and agreements and accountabilities. We're trying to get sharp messages across to headteachers that any budget will bring with it accountability.

Decisions about funding were made centrally, usually by the assistant directors of education who were interviewed. Mainstream schools had a basic per capita allowance for children with recorded special educational needs. Beyond this, the school may have been allocated additional resources, specific to a child or to be used by the generality of children with SEN, whether recorded or not. Decisions about the allocation of resources, of which staffing was inevitably the largest, varied from region to region. Staffing levels of teachers in special schools were normally based on national standards (see table 2.3 in Chapter 2). Levels of learning support staff in mainstream schools and non-teaching staff in both sectors were much more variable and this concerned regional officials:

> The kindest way to describe [the region's] present staffing arrangements for special needs is that they're flexible; or you could suggest that they're ad hoc; they're certainly transitional and more often than not they're unclear. Whatever anybody else may tell you, we do not have a staffing standard in special educational needs . . . Teachers appointed for special needs are aggregated. . . and shared out in what I would caricature as a scatter gun approach, a 0.1 [FTE] here, a 0.2 there.

Not all of the variation was attributed to idiosyncratic practices. There were several anomalies in the staffing of different kinds of institutions which made parity difficult. For example, schools which traditionally made provision for children with severe and profound difficulties were often staffed by instructors as well as teachers. The historical basis of most budgets (calculated on previous allocations), did not allow education officers to make radical changes from year to year.

Records of Needs, of course, had resource implications. Each region's psychological service, normally involved in the recording process, made recommendations about levels of support or resources. The final agreement, however, lay with the assistant director who signed Part V (measures proposed by the region) and released resources. Several officers drew attention to the need to develop approaches to funding that were not dependent upon Records of Needs:

> Past practice was for psychologists to associate 0.15 [FTE] with any Record of Needs they opened which was clearly nonsense. . . there is a difference between the way a resource is generated, which is demographic and statistical, and the way in which it's used, which is according to need. So, in other words, it's a truism that many children will need help beyond 0.15 and for some it won't be 0.15 they need, it will be a ramp or an auxiliary or something else.

Directorate officials emphasised the need for guidelines on recording from SOED, without which they expected to face increasing pressure from schools and other sources to open Record of Needs. The introduction of DSM was seen by them as likely to exacerbate this situation. The kind of uncertainty within the regions over recording seemed to relate to making appropriate decisions about which children should be recorded. As far as the case study schools were concerned, there seemed to be a lack of clarity over what a Record of Needs meant in resource terms. The two examples below illustrate the tension caused by the uneasy relationship between recording and resources.

For the first case, in a mainstream secondary, the Chair of the school board had insisted that the region provide a staffing entitlement associated with each recorded pupil. According to the school staff, the case had been won and there had subsequently been an appointment of a 0.9 FTE, who was contracted to work solely with recorded children in the school. Although this teacher worked within the school, he had been appointed to an area learning support team outside the school. This required spending the remainder of contracted time in the team base and removed any obligation to provide staff cover within the school. Beyond that, he was expected to provide the same kind of learning support to pupils, but only to those with Records of Needs. Not surprisingly, there were practical difficulties in making this distinction on a daily basis.

In the second case, staff in a primary school (including the headteacher) understood that the appointment of a part-time SEN teacher with responsibility for three recorded pupils was in place of general learning support staffing for non-recorded pupils. The appointment had been made initially for one recorded pupil and the other two had been seen to 'benefit' from intensive support. The headteacher said that the SEN teacher's workload could have been distributed differently (less focused on the three pupils), but feared that the parents of one of the recorded pupils would complain about a reduction in support. Eventually, a decision had been taken within the school to extend the remit of the SEN teacher to work with a group of non-recorded pupils in the upper stages of primary. The headteacher described this as a 'compromise', which needed to be justified to the parents of the recorded pupil she was most concerned about, but indicated that there was still an absence of learning support elsewhere in the school.

These two examples are interesting in two respects. First, there appears to be an expectation that a resource should be used in the way it has been generated, that is, solely on recorded pupils. In the secondary school, the efforts to obtain this extra resource on behalf of the recorded pupils may have led to a feeling that it had to be protected. In the primary school, the picture is more difficult to understand. If the staff were correctly interpreting that the SEN teacher was a substitute for a learning support entitlement, the region had failed to make provision for non-recorded pupils in this school. If, on the other hand, the region expected the SEN teacher's support to be available for both recorded and non-recorded pupils, the school had not understood this and was not making provision of this kind. Either way there seemed to be a mismatch between the resource provided and perceptions of its use, but time constraints prevented us from exploring this further. The second point is a more general one about recorded and non-recorded pupils. A school which is pursuing integration could argue that such distinctions are unhelpful and that support should be available for all pupils, whether they have a Record of Needs or not. DSM is likely to require schools to account in a more detailed way for how money allocated for SEN is spent. Regions may well take a greater interest in recorded pupils, for whom funding will be retained centrally.

Comparisons of costs in mainstream and special schools

The comparison that is of interest is, of course, that between the costs of providing for children with similar needs in different settings. That is not a comparison that is normally made, as four directorate officers and six educational psychologists pointed out. Of these ten individuals, seven (three directorate officers and four psychologists) felt unable to make an accurate comparison and in three regions there were no special schools.

The general reluctance to analyse the comparative costs of mainstream and special schools should not, perhaps, come as a great surprise. Local authorities have tended to enjoy overwhelming support for special educational needs among elected members and such exercises could be considered irrelevant and possibly unethical. Comparisons between mainstream and special schools might also be regarded as inappropriate, because pupils' needs in each sector may vary considerably. If comparisons are made which do not take into account the severity of needs within establishments, special schools might regard these as unfair. Finally, there may be a considerable difficulty of identifying the full costs of educating a pupil with SEN, particularly in mainstream. This last point is an important one, since it could be argued that the more effectively a child is being integrated, the more hidden the costs.

The difficulty in obtaining accurate figures on the costs of educating a pupil within mainstream lies in the disaggregation from the general costs of educational provision. Per capita costs for mainstream (and indeed special) schools, which all schools are now legally bound to provide, are obtained by dividing the total budgeted school running costs by the number of pupils on roll. Calculations of the per capita cost of pupils with special educational needs would need to find a way of separating out all the costs of provision for individual pupils from general school provision. In addition, some of the support for pupils may come from the region, for example from the psychological service, and this would also need to be disaggregated. The danger is that not all costs are accounted for, making mainstream provision look cheaper than it actually is. Even local authorities, who have accountants and financial advisers at their disposal, have found the task of breaking down global budgets and separating SEN and mainstream pupil costs for the purposes of DSM awesome.

It may be easier to calculate the costs for some pupils than for others, as the following examples from the case studies illustrate. Raschida and Laura, both visually impaired, were accompanied to all classes by specialist teachers. The cost of this and the production of embossed diagrams, conversion of text into Braille and the purchase of equipment could be calculated, even where several pupils shared the same support or resources at the same time. It would be more difficult to establish the cost of provision within the special unit, particularly because the school did not disaggregate costs such as electricity (although the unit did have its own budget). Sarah, a pupil with moderate/severe learning difficulties had support within some mainstream classes, which was shared with other pupils, and a small amount of individual teaching. It would not be easy to calculate precisely the actual support she received and its cost. Furthermore, mainstream teachers indicated that they spent a disproportionate amount of time with her when no learning support was provided, and prepared additional materials for her. The question of how much this cost does not seem to be answerable in anything other than general terms

Of the 25 officers who were prepared to offer comparisons, only two (from the same region) drew directly on information from costing exercises, which showed a higher average cost in special than in mainstream. They pointed out, however, that the margin of difference was not large because of the high costs of some placements of individuals in mainstream schools. One officer mentioned an analysis of costs that was incomplete and one said it was unsatisfactory because the figures for mainstream did not include all costs. At a superficial level it appeared that twice as many (14) judged provision in special schools to be the more expensive as those (seven) perceiving mainstream provision as the more costly. Four officers suggested that costs were roughly similar

in the two sectors. When the detail of the responses is examined, however, the picture is less clear. Of the 14 who saw special schools as more expensive, three were comparing mainstream provision with residential placements outwith the region and two others were comparing special schools with special units or bases attached to schools rather than with regular mainstream classes. The seven who saw mainstream placements as more expensive referred for the most part to children who need individualised auxiliary and/or learning support. In one case of a division within a large region, mainstream costs were seen as higher than special within the division but lower across the whole region.

The findings provide us with little hard data on comparative costs, but suggest that both directorate officers and educational psychologists (no significant differences between them) are more likely to **think** of special schools as more expensive. When the data **within** authorities is examined, however, the picture is inconsistent. In only three cases (two island authorities which depend heavily on out-of-region residential care and one rural authority with few special schools) was the same judgement about relative costs made by both directorate officer and psychologist. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of these findings is the way in which they point to the various factors that are salient to officers' thinking about the cost of provision.

In one of the case study regions (E), analysis of the resourcing of special needs provision was carried out as part of a major review. This focused on:

- special school provision
- residential placements outwith the region
- special needs auxiliary provision in mainstream and special schools (including special units and SEN bases).

Each of these aspects was seen as important in the context of devolved school management.

One exercise in costing distinguished between different kinds of special school provisions and produced an estimated average cost (and range) per pupil for the financial year 1992/93. Attention was drawn, however, to the likelihood that some of the costs of special units or bases (eg administration, premises and supplies) would be met through the budget of the mainstream school of which it was part. Table 5.1 offers some interesting comparisons, although these have to be treated with caution.

Table 5.1: Estimated Average Costs per Pupil 1992-93 in Special Schools and Units within Region E

Type of provision	Staff costs	Premises	Supplies	Admin	Transport	Net Costs
School for hearing impaired	**9908**	**656**	**196**	**26**	**2223**	**15618**
range	9547-9974	200-739	50-223	0-30	1674-2323	14073-15899
Mixed special school	**5702**	**656**	**181**	**16**	**949**	**7739**
range	4964-8286	274-1726	93-279	3-57	372-1564	6575-15398
Residential EBD	**20881**	**2591**	**833**	**324**	**1112**	**28510**
range	n/a					
EBD day school	**7820**	**356**	**129**	**21**	**1687**	**10007**
range	4506-10299	107-1059	91-169	10-57	172-4271	4816-13579
Severe/profound LD school	**13517**	**1714**	**187**	**41**	**2066**	**19065**
range	12280-16786	1158-3555	79-386	39-45	1738-2789	18317-21665
SEN Base	**3915**	**151**	**100**	**1**	**863**	**4971**
range	3053-5798	0-1266	0-185	0-7	0-2059	3176-7699
Language impaired unit	**4831**	**1**	**5**	**10**	**1378**	**6222**
range	n/a					
SpLD class	**3967**	**37**	**150**	**0**	**743**	**4717**
range	3316-5202	0-134	20-484		954-1340	3427-6865

Note: Average cost per mainstream pupil is £1650 (primary) and £2690 (secondary) (Scottish Office, 1994a). Table 5.1 gives average cost per pupil (primary and secondary).

The table shows that residential special schools for children with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties (mostly outside the region) were the most costly form of provision, followed by schools for pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties. Special classes and bases look far cheaper than special school provision, but because of the difficulty of disaggregation, it is unlikely that an accurate picture of these costs has been obtained. It is, nevertheless, an interesting partial picture of the elements which can be accounted for. In Chapter 9 we offer a set of very tentative hypotheses suggested by this data but we stress that these must be read in the context of an incomplete picture of the actual costs of provision.

The region was reviewing all of its residential provision at the time of the case study. In 1993, 122 children were placed in residential provision. Of these, 60 had emotional or behavioural difficulties; 47 had severe, complex, specific, language or communication difficulties; and 15 had sensory impairment. Officials and elected

members were aware of the high costs of such placements and wanted to explore alternatives within the region (with as many children as possible placed in their own community) and to improve working and funding arrangements with the social work department. Roughly half of the children with emotional/behavioural difficulties were placed and funded by the social work department, with the others placed by the education authority. Officers and elected members sought to take account of the best interests of the child, the necessity for placements outside the region for some individuals and parental choice. The possibility of introducing some form of arbitration to assist in final decisions about placements (for example a Children's Representation Officer) was being explored within the authority.

The costs of special needs auxiliaries in mainstream and special schools had developed somewhat unevenly across the region and were also a focus of the review. Average costs per child (obtained by dividing the total costs of special needs auxiliaries by the total number of pupils on roll, with and without SEN) in each area provided stark comparisons. Costs ranged from £8.69 in a part of the city and £26.16 in one of the rural areas. An examination of the numbers of auxiliaries in relation to the number of recorded pupils in each area gave a clearer picture of different patterns of recording and mainstreaming. Availability or accessibility of special school or unit provision and professional and parental commitment were identified as possible sources of variation within the authority.

Devolved school management schemes and special educational needs

The interviews with policy makers in the twelve education authorities were carried out when devolved school management schemes were still being formulated. They had received a consultative paper, *Devolved School Management: guidelines for progress* (SOED, 1992c); the second document *Guidelines for Schemes* (1993a) had not been published when the interviews were held. Some officers were uncertain about their authority's schemes, but most offered some general comment regarding the likely effects of DSM on special educational needs. By the time the case studies of two education authorities were undertaken, all DSM schemes had been submitted to the SOED and the schemes of all twelve regions are summarised in Appendix B.

The SOED guidelines, whilst encouraging regions to develop schemes which take account of their own circumstances and accounting practices, also set out a number of conditions which must be adhered to. DSM schemes are to be in place in all primary and secondary schools by 1 April 1996 and in all special schools by 1 April 1997. Authorities are expected to devolve 80% of their expenditure on schools to the control of headteachers; alternatively this may be delegated to school boards under the School

Boards (Scotland) Act. Not all of the region's expenditure on schools, however, is potentially devolved to schools. Control of some items of expenditure that are directly relevant to provision for SEN can be retained centrally and are, therefore, outwith the scheme:

- psychological and learning support services
- support for the integration of individual pupils with special educational needs
- support for children with Records of Needs provided by other services (eg health boards)
- home to school transport.

Other expenditure that may be retained centrally (school meals and milk, bursaries, clothing and footwear grants, expenditure supported by central government specific grants and premature retirement costs) may be indirectly relevant to SEN provision.

The costs of staff, equipment and other supplies and services are devolved to schools. All of these have implications for provision for SEN, and authorities may choose whether to make different arrangements for provision in mainstream and special schools.

> It is for authorities to decide whether there should be variations in the scheme they put forward for their area for different categories of school. This will depend on local circumstances. It may, for instance, be appropriate (within the basic requirements of expenditure being allocated predominantly in relation to pupil numbers) to make different provisions for primary, secondary and special schools or to incorporate specific provisions related to community use (SOED, 1993a, p.9).

It appears that if the region decides that funding should be targeted specifically at children with SEN, then that funding will have to be ring-fenced by schools, but there is no requirement that such monies be so identified.

> The guidelines do not prescribe how schemes should allocate financial resources to schools. The intention is that authorities should develop policies on the allocation of resources to schools which are fair and clearly set out. This should be achieved by a system relating the bulk of funding to pupil/student numbers in each school, with additional factors to take account of other specific requirements. Such requirements would include considerations relating to the delivery of the curriculum and the particular circumstances of individual schools. Funds allocated specifically for the provision of education for individual children with special educational needs would be assured and therefore not able to be used by the receiving school for any other purpose and, in this context, the Secretary of State will expect schemes to make clear

> each authority's plans for providing for special educational needs under the new arrangements (SOED, 1993a, p.9).

Further clarification was sought from SOED on this last point. Their response indicated that the regions' plans for provision should relate to **all** pupils with SEN, whether recorded or not. It was expected, however, that the responsibility for the use of resources for children with Records of Needs would remain in local authority control.

How have the authorities 'made clear' their plans for such provision? All the regional and island authorities (see appendix 2) have retained some central control of expenditure on SEN provision but this relates almost entirely to children with a Record of Needs. All regional psychological services remain under central control, although in one case this will be subject to review. Apart from this the picture is a mixed one of the provision of peripatetic, advisory and learning support. Variation is also apparent on how special schools are included in the schemes, but this depends largely on how many special schools the authority has and reflects the later (1997) date for inclusion of the special sector.

The arrangements for children **without** Records of Needs are much less clear and appear to differ among the authorities. Three large authorities, which include major urban populations, intend to build additional weightings into their formulae to take some account of social deprivation. There is assumed to be a link between such deprivation (assessed by indicators like free school meals) and the prevalence of learning difficulties. Of the other nine authorities, three have provided no details of weightings, two have no weightings associated with deprivation or special needs and one regional and two island authorities have included an element for basic learning support or designated classes and units (the latter involve ring-fenced budgets). A summary of the elements of the schemes that are relevant to SEN provision is provided in appendix 2.

Regional officers had taken an interest in approaches to the funding of SEN provision within the system of Local Management of Schools (LMS) in England and Wales. Some had direct experience of LMS in previous employment; others had undertaken study visits to LEAs; most had knowledge of the effects of LMS on pupils with SEN, from research or other sources. Their greatest concern was that competition between schools would discourage responsibility for pupils with SEN and would increase the numbers of requests for Records of Needs or children 'referred out', that is moved out of mainstream and into special schools (Lunt and Evans, 1994). Several officers commented on the increased numbers of children with emotional/behavioural difficulties being excluded from schools in England and Wales (Pyke, 1992; Armstrong

and Galloway, 1994). Despite being discomfited by the 'horror stories' from the South, officers contended many of the negative effects of LMS would be avoided under DSM schemes in Scotland:

> Our main concern will be to arrange DSM for special education in a way that doesn't discourage schools from taking pupils with special educational needs and providing properly for their integration.

Directorate officials thought competition between Scottish schools was unlikely, but this seemed to be based solely on their conviction that it that it was not 'in the Scottish mentality'. The Scottish education system was seen by one officer as sufficiently robust to withstand outside pressures (for example from league tables) but a sensible approach was needed from local authorities:

> For ten years in teaching we've railed against the strong autonomous professional - close the door and get on with it. So we now have team teaching, co-operative teaching, department meetings minuted, much more formal management, accountability. . . teachers are much more a team than when I started teaching twenty years ago. Now are we going to throw that all away by creating strong autonomous schools that don't speak to one another? No we're not.

There was, however, a suspicion among officers that DSM might be viewed as a forerunner to opting out:

> We need to make sure that headteachers don't see themselves as going towards self government. That's quite different from self management. I think DSM will improve provision if we pick out the valuable things and throw out the dross.

As for the rising levels of exclusion of children with emotional/behavioural difficulties, officers were less sanguine that this scenario could be avoided in Scotland. DSM, in their view, was likely to exacerbate an already difficult situation, rather than be the underlying cause of a new problem.

There was little evidence, from the interviews with policy makers, that regions were taking steps to avoid some of the negative effects of LMS. Officers did, however, mention important distinctions between LMS and DSM (as set out in the SOED guidelines) and regarded the Scottish schemes as likely to be superior in each respect. Staffing costs within DSM schemes were to be calculated on an actual, not an average (as in LMS), basis and officers welcomed the disincentive to schools to employ younger, inexperienced staff. Regional officers also saw advantages in devolving budgets to headteachers, rather than, as in England and Wales, to governing bodies. Headteachers were viewed as well placed to identify needs within their school and to

allocate the necessary resources for meeting these. Officers envisaged an important role for school boards, however, in supporting headteachers and monitoring the quality of provision within schools. Quality assurance inspections and school development planning were cited as additional mechanisms of monitoring. The extensive new management responsibilities to be enjoyed by headteachers, appeared to come with strict measures for accountability.

Perceptions of the impact of DSM on SEN provision

In Chapter 3, we reported on how education officers viewed the likely impact of DSM and other policy changes on provision for children with special educational needs. Here, we consider the two case study authorities whose schemes were at different stages of development and implementation and report on the effects on SEN provision so far.

Authority H

This authority was the first in Scotland to introduce a scheme for DSM, following a decision to reorganise its department of education in 1989. A pilot scheme was introduced, individuals were appointed with a DSM remit and the council agreed to extend this to all education establishments in 1990. The education committee viewed the scheme as allowing for decision making which was tailored to local needs. A new role for local authorities was envisaged for the 1990s as facilitators of service provision and in monitoring quality; the authority saw itself as being sufficiently powerful to enable local decision making whilst also safeguarding the schools' interests, for example by providing contingency protection against emergencies.

Phase one of the scheme began in August 1990 and involved six clusters of secondaries and their associated primaries (33 schools). Phase two, from August 1992, brought in a further 37 clusters (including one of the case study secondary schools) and this time four special schools entered the scheme. By April 1994, 50% of the region's primary, secondary and special schools (including one of the case study special schools) were operating delegated budgets and the remainder were expected to be within the 'proven and popular' DSM scheme before the end of that financial year. This was, of course, well in advance of the timetable set by the SOED.

It was originally envisaged that special schools would join a cluster of a secondary and its associated primary schools. This appeared to work successfully in the early phases of implementation, but once the city special schools were included, became unmanageable. It was decided to cluster a group of city special schools together as an interim measure. Regional officers considered these arrangements unsatisfactory, but

necessary in the short term to enable the schools to receive support, for example in administration and equipment.

The budgets for special schools were not constructed in the same way as primary and secondary schools because they were seen as requiring greater flexibility. Therefore, instead of receiving a fixed amount, based largely on pupil numbers, each special school was allocated a consumables budget which included a range of items within the heads of expenditure normally devolved to schools (ie furniture, fixtures and fittings; property related costs; and supplies and services). Staffing had not yet been devolved to special schools and was being considered separately by a working group. The consumables budget was not separated into different heads of expenditure, but was given to each school as a lump sum to use as appropriate. The actual amount was negotiated between the headteacher and regional officials. Headteachers might have taken an opportunity to overestimate the budget for his or her school, but the degree of trust by the regional officials was tempered with a knowledge of historical budgets. As one officer commented:

> I think the feeling has always been that the headteachers are the ones who are there on the ground, in the situation and they know. If you've got a headteacher who's going to be gung ho and say "I must have £30,000 to run my school," he's not going to get it because you're going to look to last year's out-turn figures. . . and say "What are you doing this year that you weren't doing last year?". . . Certainly the heads that are taking part, I think they see the sums on the table and they see a much more open way of doing it and I think they're much more happy to accept that that's a reasonable step forward.

There was no ultimate protection, however, against abuse of the system:

> Anyone in the world, in business or commerce can defraud a system if they're intent on defrauding it. All of the safeguards that we've put in place are there to ensure that that doesn't happen but somebody could still get around it. You could still get a headteacher who fills in a form and says "the learning support teacher is with x, y and z classes" and "so and so with special needs - yes somebody's supposed to come in and give them an extra hour's tuition." Now if they lie on that form, there's nothing we can do [DSM] is not going to alter it. What they're doing is something they've probably been doing in the past.

Some of the special schools in Region H made provision for children across divisional and regional boundaries. These were specialist schools, for example for pupils with communication and language disorders, with high levels of resourcing. They had not yet been included in the region's DSM scheme, but would be at a later date.

As far as mainstream schools were concerned, the budget for special needs provision was not devolved to headteachers, but this related only to pupils with Record of Needs. Beyond that, the fixed virement levels within budget heads were intended to protect regional policies, including those relating to pupils with non-recorded special educational needs. Effectively, headteachers would be unable to vire expenditure (outwards) beyond the level set for particular budget heads.

The authority set up a working group to consider staffing and other managerial and organisational aspects of special educational needs. Its report (out for consultation at the time of writing) proposed a staffing standard for special schools, units, mainstream support and peripatetic support for sensory impairment; the introduction of a single appointment with a long career structure to replace auxiliaries and instructors; and the establishment of 'network teams'. These differed from 'clusters' (for DSM) in that they focused on learning support provision for recorded and non-recorded pupils. Mainstream schools within networks would be given an SEN 'shareholding', a proportion of their anticipated staffing requirements. Additional staffing would be allocated to the network (not to individual schools) and the participating schools would have to distribute this by somehow reaching agreement over where the need was greatest. From the region's point of view, it would take some of the responsibility for resource allocation from them. The schools, however, could find themselves in direct competition with each other for scarce resources, in the kind of climate which officers had argued was not 'in the Scottish mentality'. The outcome of the consultation was not known at the time of writing.

One of the case study mainstream secondary schools had a special unit and both the school and the unit entered the DSM scheme in 1992. The unit was given a separate budget, calculated in the same way as those of special schools, but some of its costs were included within the budget heads for the whole school. It would have been impractical, for example, to distinguish the amount of electricity used by the unit from the school's general consumption. The consumables budget was negotiated by the head of the unit and a regional official. The headteacher of the mainstream school clearly enjoyed his new responsibilities and looked forward to an extension of these:

> We don't have full control over all our budget areas. That will come eventually. . . when people talk about the total budget for the school, a school like this is something between £2.5 to £2.75 million. I don't handle anything like that because I don't handle the catering side, I don't handle direct works side, I don't handle cleaning direct, I don't handle the auxiliary staff wages or staff wages. Eventually we are going to have total control; I would relish that. I know many heads wouldn't, but thankfully I have an accountancy background before I came into teaching, so I know my

> way around a balance sheet and ledger lines and stuff like that. I think it will come, the indications are all there, the careers service are going to be down loading to us, the education development service - from the 1st April this year [1994] we will have a down loaded budget from there to spend as we wish.

The head of the SEN unit also regarded DSM as a vast improvement on the previous arrangements:

> Up until then I used to have a per capita of £55 a head which was about £1,000 [in total]and there is nothing you can do with that. . . I spent £4,500 on computing equipment this year, now I would have to have sent a begging letter to [regional officer] or whoever, they would then would have then looked at all the SEN provision and decide who was going to get what and just depending on how good you were at begging really, it is a waste of time, whereas I can buy what I want to buy. If I need something I can buy it, so from my point of view it is much much better.

Regional officers thought that provision for pupils with Records of Needs had not been adversely affected because the authority had retained central control of this. Furthermore, the scheme's strong financial accountability (the authority could examine any changes to a school's budget, daily if necessary) enabled monitoring of spending on SEN provision, although this was more difficult in relation to non-recorded pupils. There had been considerable problems, however, in calculating funding eg for staffing in SEN. The introduction of devolved school management also involved dismantling substantial bureaucracies. This was not easy for authority officials (many of whom were reportedly reluctant to relinquish control) and headteachers (said to be suspicious of the authority's motives). Looking to the future, officers voiced some concerns about the collective impact of DSM and local government reorganisation, particularly in relation to the ability of the smaller authorities to maintain current level of SEN services at the centre: 'In special needs large is beautiful, because big budgets have flexibility' (Regional officer). This could make opting out within the smaller authorities an attractive option (see Chapter 3).

Authority E

This authority was in the process of developing and introducing its scheme at the time of the case study and expected to follow the time scale for implementation set out by SOED. From April 1994, all mainstream schools had a small measure of devolution in the form of an extended per capita budget (equipment, furniture, per capita allowance and remote schools travel allowance). Beyond this, 50 schools (four secondaries and associated primaries) received a fully devolved budget, including staffing and staff development, premises and administration during 1994/95. The region's DSM scheme

extended to community and nursery education. Although there was no statutory obligation to do this, officials envisaged that it would be impractical to try to operate dual management systems within schools.

Special schools were not included in phase 1 of the implementation of DSM, as regional officials saw the need for a separate scheme for special schools. This was expected to be completed by 1995. Also outside the pilot phase of the scheme were all learning support staff, largely because of the more complicated way in which these individuals were managed. Learning support staff had, in the past, been appointed to 'Area Special Educational Needs Teams', which usually covered a secondary and associated primary schools (see Chapter 2). Although the majority of staff were based in a single school, some worked in more than one establishment and none were part of a schools mainstream staffing complement. At the time of the research, the region was considering discontinuing these arrangements and appointing teachers instead to particular schools.

Regional officials stressed the importance of taking time over the plans for special educational needs provision within DSM, because of the complexity of funding, particularly for special schools. They also wanted, however, to give messages to special schools that they were fully involved in the development and implementation of the authority's scheme. The logic of the SOED's acceptance of a later (1997) entry of special schools into DSM was questioned, given the timing of local government reorganisation. Regional officials stressed the importance of basing the funding of SEN provision in mainstream and special schools on both humanitarian and utilitarian principles and before budgets were devolved, there needed to be clarity regarding:

- definition of need
- evidence of need
- process to identify a level of need
- specification of what is expected from those aiming to meet needs
- quality assurance and evidence of quality provision.

One officer stressed the importance of obtaining specifications for schools:

> You mustn't hand money out until you've had your specification down first. That's what I was concerned about, that we've got a written specification, an agreed standard of special needs provision right across the board that was acceptable to schools, but more importantly guaranteeing to us that those children would be safe and well educated and that their parents will be happy and so on.. . once the money goes out, people start cutting corners.

The specification was expected to detail the roles and responsibilities of individuals (eg mainstream and learning support staff) and school policies. These would set out the obligations on schools and staff in relation to pupils with special educational needs and, it was envisaged, introduce tighter criteria for recording. Any school making a request to have a child recorded would require to demonstrate what they had already done to try to meet his or her needs. Schools with recorded pupils would be expected to respond to a higher level of specification:

> It's getting across to schools that there are certain levels of provision that we expect of them. They don't just get the money and get on with it. We'd have things, like for a child with special needs you'd expect to see a log of meetings with parents to discuss these things. . . they've got to show that they've done all the things we would reasonably expect them to do before they come to us for additional help.

Progression was identified by the same officer as another important aspect of provision and schools would need to produce evidence for this:

> If you're spending, say, ten thousand pounds a year extra on a kid, you do expect to see some progress for your money and if there is no progress at all, the question is why are we spending the money then?. . . It might, in some cases be very slight and imperceptible but the progress has still got to be there.

Regional officers anticipated that the allocation of funding for SEN would be based on a banding system, similar to the practice within Kent local education authority. Each level specifies what a child requires from the school and the resources allocated via the general formula. For a child to be registered at a higher level (with more resources), the school must specify the enhancement which is to be provided and their returns are moderated by clusters of schools and the LEA (Audit Commission, 1992). The Kent scheme was viewed by officers in Region E as helping to blur the distinction between recorded and non-recorded pupils and likely to reduce the demand for Records of Needs. Five bands of support were envisaged in this region. At level one, a mainstream school would be expected to respond to a child's needs entirely within its own resources. The highest level (six) would involve a residential placement and high costs. One officer said that the aim would be to reduce the number of residential placements and to move pupils from special to mainstream schools where possible. He said that it was also important to ensure the introduction of DSM supported the development of the region's SEN policy, to replace special schools with SEN bases.

The authority's plans for the funding of non-recorded pupils in mainstream schools were still being considered at the time of the research. No decision had been reached on

weightings for social deprivation, but it was expected that a formula would incorporate a link between numbers of free school meals and the incidence of special educational needs.

It was too early to report any impact of DSM on special educational needs in this region, but officers thought there had been few adverse effects, particularly in relation to pupils with Records of Needs, for whom they had retained central control over resources. As in authority H, however, officers worried about the collective impact of DSM and local government reorganisation on special educational needs provision. Two individuals suggested that this would lead to headteachers demanding a higher proportion of the schools' budget than the 80% to be devolved to them under the present arrangements. This would make it difficult for the new authorities (especially the smaller ones) to maintain existing levels of resources.

Summary

The funding of provision for children with special educational needs appears, in the past, to have been determined largely by what children's needs are perceived to be, a position supported by elected members of all parties. The kinds of questions we have been asking, for example about the comparative costs of mainstream and special schools, have not traditionally been the focus of attention within local authorities. Yet, officers made it clear that these were becoming increasingly important, particularly through concern about the increasing costs of SEN provision. This has made it increasingly difficult for regional officers to allocate resources purely on the basis of needs. Resource allocation was held to be variable within regions and the distinction, for resource purposes, between recorded and non-recorded pupils was a source of considerable tension. The two examples from the case study schools illustrated the practical difficulties faced by teachers trying to meet the needs of both 'kinds' of pupils.

The experiences of the two case study authorities, although they were at different stages of implementation, seem to have been positive, according to the regional officers and the small number of headteachers we spoke to. They were, however, less sanguine about the operation of DSM schemes within the new single tier authorities. Officers in both regions expressed satisfaction that they had in place sufficient mechanisms to ensure accountability, which they saw as particularly important in relation to pupils with SEN. So far, the focus of attention of SOED and education authorities in developing DSM schemes has largely been on recorded pupils, with funding for them not devolved to schools. It was difficult to get a clear picture, at this stage, of the regions' plans for pupils without Records of Needs and for whom funding will be devolved. It is this group, however, which is at greatest risk of losing out. Schools

will be less accountable to authorities regarding their provision and may be inclined to give priority in allocating resources to recorded pupils. Authorities are likely to face greater pressure to record pupils and concern has already been expressed over the extra demands on psychologists' time that will inevitably follow.

6
FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PLACEMENT OF PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Introduction

A central concern of the research was to consider the nature of the decision-making process in relation to the placement of pupils with recorded special educational needs. In Chapter 4, we noted patterns of placement indicated by official statistics and in this chapter we draw on data from our case study pupils to provide insight into how such patterns came about in given instances. We were particularly interested in the effect of a number of key variables which are briefly summarised below.

A key theme of the Warnock report was that a child's 'category of handicap' was inadequate as an automatic indicator of an appropriate educational placement, but that a range of factors such as level of achievement, characteristics and degree of family support should be brought into play in such decisions. We therefore wished to consider placement in relation to these factors as well as the nature of the child's difficulties. An important aspect of our research design was to focus on pupils with similar difficulties in mainstream and special schools and throughout the following analysis we attempt to identify why specific placement decisions were made for particular pupils and the outcomes which ensued. In addition, we wished to gain a sense of how it was decided to move a pupil from mainstream to special and vice versa.

Multi-professional involvement and full consultation with parents were themes of the Warnock report and these have subsequently been reiterated in official documents (SOED, 1993; 1994). In this research we have considered the extent to which such collaborative interactions were evident. In addition, since the passage of the 1980 (Scotland) Act (as amended), considerable emphasis has been placed on the importance of parents exercising choice in relation to school placement. The document *A Parents' Guide to Special Educational Needs* (SOED, 1993b) for example, maintained that additional cost should not necessarily represent valid grounds for an education authority's refusal to acquiesce with a placement request. The balance to be struck in making such judgements was described thus:

> [The education authority] must accept your request unless it can be shown that it is not reasonable to grant it, having regard to the extra benefit which is likely to result from the school placement proposed by you compared with the extra cost. (SOED, 1993b, p14)

One way in which the research data were used, therefore, was to explore the extent to which parents felt that a range of options had been considered and the extent to which they felt their stated preferences had been acted upon. Finally, we considered the implications of certain placements. What were the opportunities for curricular and social integration in mainstream schools and special units and how successful were special schools in forging links with the mainstream? What judgements were made about the 'best' type of provision for individual children by parents and teachers?

Case studies of individual pupils

As described in Chapter 1, our plan was to compare the experiences of pupils with similar characteristics in mainstream and special schools. We began by identifying mainstream and special schools catering for certain types of pupil in Region E and Division Q and then requested headteachers to indicate pupils who might fit given profiles, e.g. a boy with physical difficulties in special; a girl with physical difficulties in mainstream. In the case of this pair, the boy, unlike the girl, had additional learning difficulties and the girl was placed in a special unit but was spending a significant proportion of her time in mainstream. It was not possible, therefore, to read off implications of special or mainstream placement for pupils with particular types of difficulty in a straightforward way; there are many intervening variables which are not controlled. Nonetheless, we were able to identify key characteristics of our pupil case studies and on this basis make comparisons between them. In some cases, such as pupils with language and communication difficulties, both children were placed in a special setting. Figure 6.1 provides summary data on the pupils discussed in this chapter and a short account of each pupil is contained in Appendix E. All names have been changed.

Table 6.1: Summary of Data on Case Study Pupils

Name	Age	Nature of difficulty	Placement	Region
Susan	11	Physical difficulties	Primary + unit	E
Malcolm	15	Physical difficulties	Special	Q
Brian	12	Down's syndrome	Primary	Q
Catherine	12	Down's syndrome	Special	E
Tony	15	Down's syndrome	Special	Q
June	19	Down's syndrome	Special	Q
Sarah	13	Severe learning difficulties	Secondary	Q
Marie	11	Severe learning difficulties	Special	E
Scott	12	Moderate learning difficulties	Primary	Q
Kirsty	11	Moderate learning difficulties	Special	Q
Colin	14	Moderate learning difficulties	Secondary	E
Graham	16	Moderate learning difficulties	Secondary + unit	E
Donald	14	Severe/profound LD	Special	E
James	11	Severe/profound LD	Special	Q
Adam	15	Specific learning difficulties	Secondary	E
David	15	Specific learning difficulties	Special	Q
Peter	11	Emotional/behavioural difficulties	Primary	E
Craig	13	Emotional/behavioural difficulties	Special	E
Laura	15	Visual impairment	Secondary + unit	Q
Raschida	17	Visual impairment	Secondary + unit	Q
Fiona	14	Hearing impairment	Secondary	E
Gordon	10	Hearing impairment	Special	E
Lesley	10	Language/communication disorder	Special	Q
Anne	17	Language/communication disorder	Special	Q

Pupils with physical difficulties

Both Malcolm (aged fifteen and educated in a special school) and Susan (aged eleven and educated for 60% of her time in mainstream and 40% in a special unit) had physical difficulties and were wheelchair users. Malcolm had spina bifida and moderate learning difficulties. He had attended the same special school for his entire educational career. His parents were working class and had little involvement with the special school in relation to educational issues although they were regular attenders at social events. When Susan first started school, it had been considered that she not only had cerebral palsy but also learning difficulties and she had been placed in a 'very special unit' for children with multiple difficulties. Later, when it was found that she

was of average ability, she was moved to the special unit within the same mainstream primary. Susan's parents were middle class and had an active involvement in her education. They had arranged for her to visit the Peto Institute and had pressurised the authority to make additional provision to fulfil the terms of the Record of Needs. In retrospect, professionals felt that Malcolm had made good progress in special school, but with additional support might also have done well in mainstream. It was believed that Susan would have made better progress had she spent less time in the SEN base and more in the mainstream class.

Pupils with severe learning difficulties

There were strong similarities in the cases of June (aged nineteen) and Tony (aged fifteen). Both had Down's syndrome and had started their education in a school for children with moderate learning difficulties, subsequently moving to a school for children with severe learning difficulties. At age fourteen, they transferred to a Future Needs unit which had recently been set up in Division Q. Both came from supportive working class family backgrounds, although contact with the school was more difficult for June's mother, a widow without a car. Neither set of parents felt able to assert their preference for a mainstream placement over the advice of teachers and educational psychologists, who believed that children with Down's syndrome were best placed in a special school catering for pupils with severe learning difficulties. In retrospect, both mothers wished that they had argued more forcefully in support of their preferred option. Staff at the Future Needs unit also felt that placement in mainstream school with ample support from a special department would have been the best possible situation.

Unlike June and Tony, Brian, a twelve year old with Down's syndrome, had received his primary education in a mainstream class of a rural primary school, although he was due to transfer to a special school for his secondary education. The fact that he remained in primary was attributed by the head teacher to the tenacity of his well educated, articulate parents. School staff, like his parents, believed that he had benefited socially from being in a mainstream class. However, teachers felt he might have learnt to read had he been placed in special (possibly a mistaken view; both June and Tony had few reading skills and both had been educated in special schools). Catherine, who was also aged twelve, had Down's syndrome and a congenital heart problem. She appeared to be of higher ability than Brian (unlike Brian who could not read, she was judged a competent reader and writer but had significant difficulties with maths) but had been educated in a special school. Her mother, very involved with her daughter's education but regarded as over-protective by the school, had resisted a proposed move to a special unit within a mainstream secondary school because she felt

her daughter would not cope with the hurly-burly and might be isolated in a small unit. However, she felt the curriculum at the all-through special school was insufficiently challenging.

Marie, aged eleven, did not have an identifiable physiological condition such as Down's syndrome but nonetheless was regarded as having severe learning difficulties. She had spent one year in a mainstream primary and had then moved to a special school catering for a range of special needs. Her parents, who had learning difficulties themselves, had little involvement in decisions over placement and had initially been strongly opposed to the special school placement due to their own negative experiences in such environments. Communication difficulties with professionals were exacerbated by their lack of a telephone. It was expected that she would remain in the same special school, but there was little hope that she would make significant progress. Sarah, aged thirteen, was identified by the psychologist as having moderate learning difficulties but according to the school she had severe learning difficulties. Like Marie, she did not have an identifiable medical condition. Teachers emphasised her co-operative and compliant behaviour, but she was also described as relatively unengaged with her surroundings. She experienced a modified maths programme, but the learning support teacher did not appear to have been able to arrange for modification of the rest of the curriculum. Unlike Scott (see below) there did not appear to be a specified proportion of learning support time to which she was entitled each week. The school supported a mainstream placement on equity grounds but felt that the existence of a special needs unit within the school would have helped.

Pupils with moderate learning difficulties

Eleven-year old Kirsty had moderate learning difficulties and, after starting her education in a mainstream primary school, was placed in a special school. Her mother, a single parent, found out about the school through an informal network and, after a visit, requested the move. She had great confidence in the school but knew little about the programme it offered; her main concern was for Kirsty's happiness. Kirsty's mother and teachers felt she was benefiting from her special school placement, but the head teacher felt she might have coped in mainstream with additional support. Scott, aged twelve, had a physiological impairment and moderate learning difficulties. He had been educated in mainstream and was due to transfer to a mainstream secondary. Scott's parents, who were middle class, were very involved with the school and were prepared to be critical of certain aspects of provision (e.g. the way the school dealt with bullying and extra-curricular activities.) Education in a mainstream class was felt to be appropriate for Scott by both parents and teachers.

Graham, a sixteen-year-old with moderate learning difficulties, began his education in a mainstream primary in authority E and after one year was moved to a special school. For his secondary education, he was moved to a special unit within a mainstream school, spending 50% of his time in mainstream (attending Standard Grade classes in English, history and maths) and 50% in the special unit. Parents had agreed with the initial move to the special school, but had not been involved in the decision to place Graham in the special unit at secondary stage. However, both parents and teachers felt this arrangement worked very well and it is worth noting that this is an option which would probably not have been available in authority Q. Colin, a fourteen year old with moderate learning difficulties and behavioural difficulties, was being educated in mainstream secondary. He had already been excluded from school on a number of occasions and clearly faced the prospect of permanent exclusion. Staff felt that placement in a special unit attached to mainstream would be a better option than his present situation, where he lacked support and was becoming caught up in the school's disciplinary system. However, although Division Q was committed to the development of such units, such a placement was not available at the time of the research.

Pupils with severe/ profound learning difficulties

Both Donald (aged fourteen) and James (aged eleven) were educated in special schools. Given the very significant nature of their needs, it was felt by parents and teachers that no other option was possible.

Pupils with specific learning difficulties

Adam, (fifteen years of age) had specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, dyspraxia, motor difficulties, behavioural difficulties and visual impairment. He was being educated in his local comprehensive with learning support and some withdrawal for individual tuition. His mother, a working class woman described as 'a fighter', had insisted that the authority provide an additional 0.3 of a learning support teacher. Prior to this, he had been placed in secondary school with an SEN base outwith the neighbourhood. He had been unhappy in the special unit, developing behavioural problems and refusing to attend school. Staff felt he was not coping well with the mainstream curriculum and he still had some behavioural problems, but his mother thought it was preferable to the special unit. David, also fifteen, had specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and behavioural difficulties. He had attended a mainstream primary and had moved to a special school at the point of secondary transfer. Teachers at the special school felt it was too late for his language difficulties to be tackled effectively and suggested he would have been better off in a special unit within a mainstream school. However, such a placement was

not available within the division. A split placement with a neighbouring comprehensive school had failed because staff found David's outspokenness unacceptable.

Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties

Craig (aged thirteen) had emotional and behavioural difficulties and learning difficulties. He had spent his entire education in special schools. A mainstream placement had not been considered a possibility. Craig had a disturbed childhood and was in his second foster home. It was felt that the school was achieving some success in modifying his behavioural problems and providing a secure environment. Peter, aged eleven, experienced emotional and behavioural difficulties and moderate learning difficulties. He was placed in an SEN base within a mainstream school, spending most of his time within the base but integrated for practical activities. Similar arrangements had been made during his primary school education. His behaviour in the special unit was considered to be worse than in the mainstream class and it was hoped that he would spend more time in mainstream.

Pupils with visual impairment

Raschida (aged seventeen) and Laura (aged fifteen) both had significant visual impairments, above average academic achievement and were being educated in mainstream schools. Laura had not attended her local primary, but a mainstream school outwith the neighbourhood with a special unit attached. A special school for blind children had not been considered appropriate in either case because it would necessitate a residential placement and would not offer the same opportunities for academic and social development. Parents and teachers on balance were satisfied with the placement and both Raschida and Laura were likely to proceed to higher education.

Pupils with hearing impairment

Fiona (aged fourteen) had a severe hearing impairment and had been placed in a secondary mainstream school. Her achievement was average for the age group. The alternative placement, in a school for deaf children within the authority, had been rejected by her parents because they did not wish their daughter to lose touch with the local community. Her elder brother, who was also partially deaf, had also been through the mainstream education system. Gordon (aged ten) was profoundly deaf and regarded as highly able. He was attending a special school for the deaf in the authority and attempts to integrate him on a part time basis had been unsuccessful. His parents were keen for him to be educated in a selective school for deaf children in England. This school had a strong academic reputation and followed oralist teaching methods in contrast with the total communication system favoured by the local school for the deaf. The likelihood of higher academic attainment, they believed, would

compensate for the disadvantage of the residential placement. In the parents' view, the authority was reluctant to consider their preferred placement, partly because of the cost and partly because they favoured the approach of the local school for the deaf.

Pupils with language and communication difficulties

Anne (aged seventeen) and Lesley (aged ten) started their career in mainstream school and subsequently moved to a special school for children with pervasive language disorders. Anne was described as having speech and language difficulties and her parents, both teachers, had gone to considerable lengths to find a school where speech therapy would be readily available. They had rejected the possibility of placing her in a special school catering for a range of special educational needs because they felt that expert support would be unavailable here as in mainstream. Anne moved to the special school at age thirteen. Lesley had autistic features, leading to extreme communication difficulties and behavioural problems. Her parents were also middle class and played an active role in the decision to move her from her local mainstream primary to the special school at age seven. The parents of both girls had some reservations with regard to the provision (Anne's parents regretted the absence of a full secondary school curriculum and peer group; Lesley's would have preferred some music and art therapy) but were generally satisfied. In both cases, professionals had doubts about the placement, but for different reasons. In Anne's case, it was felt that a mainstream placement with appropriate support would have been preferable; in Lesley's case, the residential nature of the placement was regarded as detrimental to family relationships and Lesley's emotional state.

General pattern of placement

Of the twenty case study pupils discussed here, thirteen were in special school placements and six were in mainstream schools. Five pupils had been placed in mainstream schools with special units and while the Scottish Office prefer to count these alongside special schools for statistical purposes, the schools saw themselves as offering specialised mainstream provision. Of these pupils, Susan was spending roughly 40% of her time in the special unit and 60% in mainstream, while Peter, who was in the same school, was in the unit for around 65% of the school week. Graham's time was split 50:50 between special unit and mainstream and Raschida and Laura spent most of their time in mainstream classes, attending the unit for approximately 10% of the week.

Table 6 .2 shows pupils who had spent their entire educational careers in one sector and those who had moved between sectors.

Table 6.2: Patterns of Placement and Movement Between Sectors

Pattern of placement	Pupils
Entirely mainstream	Sarah, Scott, Fiona, Raschida, Laura, Colin, Brian (about to move to special), Peter, Susan.
Entirely special	Malcolm, Donald, James, Catherine
Moved from mainstream to special	Lesley, Anne, Gordon, Marie, David, Kirsty
Moved from special to mainstream	Graham
Moved within mainstream	Adam
Moved within special	Craig, June, Tony,

Among pupils who had moved, the general direction was from mainstream into special. Most moved after a short time in primary. Another point of movement was at transfer to secondary and the opening of a Record of Needs tended to follow such a move. A few pupils moved from special to mainstream, for instance, Graham moved from a mainstream primary to a special school and, at secondary transfer, to a special unit in a comprehensive. Adam moved from an SEN base in a secondary school to a mainstream secondary.

There was also movement within the special sector. For instance, June and Tony moved from a special school for children with moderate learning difficulties, to a school for pupils with severe learning difficulties, and then to a Future Needs unit.

Factors affecting placement

Nature of difficulties

As might have been anticipated, the general pattern was for pupils with more significant cognitive difficulties to be placed in special schools, for instance Donald and James were placed in a school for pupils with profound learning difficulties and June and Tony in a school for pupils with severe learning difficulties. However, there were some exceptions, for instance, Brian, with Down's syndrome, spent his primary education in a mainstream primary and Sarah, with severe learning difficulties, was likely to spend her entire education in mainstream. Parental influence on such placements is discussed below. In Sarah's case, the fact that she presented as happy and co-operative may have influenced the decision to retain her in mainstream.

Pupils with less pronounced cognitive difficulties were in a range of settings which sought to provide specialist support within mainstream. For instance, Scott, with some developmental delay due to a physical condition, and Adam, with specific learning difficulties, received designated learning support in mainstream.

Pupils with sensory difficulties (and without learning difficulties) tended to be in mainstream. The exception here was Gordon, whose profound deafness meant that he was unable to access the curriculum within mainstream. His curriculum in a special school for the deaf was academic, but his parents were anxious for him to attend a selective school where there would be an even greater emphasis on success in external examinations.

In the case of the two pupils with physical difficulties, the key variable appeared to be the presence (or otherwise) of cognitive difficulties. Susan had been placed in a 'very special unit' when it was thought (mistakenly) that she had learning difficulties in addition to cerebral palsy. She moved to a special unit within the same mainstream primary when the misdiagnosis was recognised and was spending increasing amounts of time in mainstream. Malcolm's cognitive difficulties in addition to his physical condition (spina bifida) meant that a mainstream placement was not regarded as feasible.

Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties were placed in a range of settings. Craig had spent all his education in special. Peter was in a special unit attached to a mainstream school but was spending around 65% of his time in the unit. When emotional and behavioural difficulties accompanied moderate or specific learning difficulties, then this appeared to indicate a special placement. For instance, David, who had both specific and global learning difficulties, was at the top of the special school ability range but his 'outspokenness' was deemed unacceptable to mainstream staff. There was some evidence that mainstream schools found it very difficult to accommodate pupils with cognitive difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Colin, with moderate learning difficulties, had been excluded from mainstream secondary on a number of occasions and it is a fairly common pattern for permanent exclusion to follow a series of temporary exclusions. The mainstream school was unable to offer him any support in the form of a counselling service.

Among our case study pupils, then, the nature of their difficulties, and professionals' perceptions of appropriate ways of meeting their needs, appeared to play a major role in influencing placement decisions. However, the fact that some pupils with similar levels of difficulty were placed in different sectors underlines the point that placement

cannot be accounted for by nature of difficulties alone. A range of other factors are brought into play and some of these are considered below.

The influence of parents

It was possible to identify three distinct levels of involvement which parents might have with their child's educational career, including decisions on placement. A small number of parents had very little involvement of any sort. For instance, Marie's parents had learning difficulties themselves and also did not have a telephone which might have facilitated communication. Craig had lived in a number of foster homes and had therefore lacked continuity of parent involvement. Colin's parents were regarded as unsupportive of their child, particularly in enforcing homework obligations. The second, and largest, group attended parents' evenings, review meetings, social events and fund-raising activities, but had little knowledge of educational issues and had played a relatively passive role in decisions on placement, deferring to the views of the professionals. They might, on occasion, feel dissatisfied with certain aspects of the school, but were unlikely to pressurise strongly for change. Finally, there was a group of parents who were extremely assertive in the decision-making process and had gone to considerable lengths to inform themselves of possible options and their legal position in terms of placement requests. Knowledge of the education system and willingness to challenge the views of professionals was often, but not always, associated with parents' own level of education. Table 6.3 summarises parents' level of involvement with educational decision making.

Table 6.3: Parents' Level of Involvement with Educational Decision Making

Level of involvement	Children
High level of involvement	Anne, Lesley, Brian, Susan, Adam, Catherine, Scott and Gordon
Involvement in school activities	June, Tony, Sarah, Malcolm, Kirsty, Graham, David, Donald, James, Raschida, Laura and Fiona
Low level of involvement	Craig, Marie and Colin

It was evident that parents' degree of assertiveness played a major role in influencing placements and, subsequently, resources available to support the child's progress. In the case of some children who were placed in unusual contexts, parents' influence appeared to have been the key factor. Thus Brian, a boy with Down's syndrome, had spent his primary years in mainstream due to the advocacy of his well-educated and

articulate parents. By way of contrast, June and Tony's parents, though also hoping for mainstream placements, had lacked the cultural resources to pitch their arguments against the views of the professionals favouring special schools for children with Down's syndrome. In both June and Tony's case, the decision on placement would have been made just before the implementation of the 1981 Act establishing the importance of parental choice. It is interesting to speculate on whether their wishes would be acted upon at the present time.

It was certainly not the case, however, that assertive parents were arguing for mainstream placements. The well-educated parents of Lesley, Anne, Gordon and Catherine all made powerful arguments in support of their claim for specialist provision in particular types of special school.

Parents who were actively involved in their child's education influenced resource availability once a decision had been made on location. Adam's mother, who lived in a socially disadvantaged inner-city area, had invested considerable energy in taking on the system and had requested a transfer from a mainstream secondary with a special unit to the neighbourhood comprehensive. She had pressurised the region into providing an additional 0.3 of a learning support teacher. Scott's mother, a middle class woman, was not content to assume that the school would provide the amount of learning support specified on the Record of Needs. She carefully monitored the individual support her son received and took the school to task if she felt her son was being short-changed. Susan's mother, who might also be described as middle class, forced the Region to provide a physiotherapist in her daughter's primary school.

It is interesting to note that although both parents were knowledgeable about their child's education, it was very often the mother who had most input in supporting the educational process through home tuition (for instance, Anne's mother), in arguing with the Region over resource allocation (this was the case in relation to Scott, Susan and Adam) and in contesting proposals on future placement (as Catherine's mother had done). Where marriages had split up, the mother had been left with the responsibility for the child's education (this was true in the cases of Kirsty and Adam; Catherine's parents were on the point of separating and it appeared that the mother was likely to retain responsibility for Catherine).

Of the group of parents identified as particularly involved, only one of these, Adam's mother, would be described as working class, whereas a large proportion of those with less involvement might be described in this way. The latter group often gleaned knowledge of the system not through direct contact with professionals, but through a

network of informal contacts, particularly friends and relatives who had some knowledge of a particular school or voluntary organisations which offered 'moral' support. Clearly, those parents who asserted their wishes achieved some success in terms of securing the placement of their choice and appropriate resources. However, if resources are to be allocated on the basis of parental demand, then the outlook for children such as Craig, who have had a number of foster homes, Marie, whose parents have learning difficulties themselves, or those whose parents do not have access to 'expert' advice, is indeed bleak.

The influence of regional policy

The placement of our case study children was clearly influenced by regional policy, and, as noted in Chapter 2, there were some clear similarities and differences. Both Region E and Division Q had similar proportions of recorded pupils in mainstream schools (about 30%; this is approximately the national average). In 1991, Region E had one of the highest proportions of the school age population placed in special schools (1.28%). This was slightly higher than the proportion of school-age pupils placed in special schools in Division Q, although in the latter region the proportion of such placements had increased slightly since 1988. There was little difference in the level of recording in the two areas and both had experienced an increase since 1988. Overall, then, there were similar patterns in Region E and Division Q with regard to incidence of recording and use of mainstream and special. The major difference, however, was in **the type of special provision** which was available.

In Region E, although there were a number of special schools, there was a policy to invest in the development of special units in mainstream schools to cater for a wide range of needs and facilitate varying degrees of inclusion in mainstream classes. In Division Q, there were a greater number of large all-through special schools (Region E had no special schools with more than 100 pupils and two schools with between 90 and 100 pupils; Division Q had three special schools with between 100 and 160 pupils. The largest of these had 157 pupils.) In Division Q, despite the fact that there was a policy commitment to develop special units in the future, these were generally not yet on stream.

It is worth considering some of the advantages and disadvantages of special units, since these appear to represent the preferred policy option of the future. Clearly, in some cases pupils were able to benefit from access to expert tuition and the benefits of inclusion in mainstream classes where appropriate. It was evident that special units were generally far more proficient at arranging partial integration than special schools on separate sites. Where special schools had tried to arrange split placements, these

had tended to break down (for instance, the collapse of the integration scheme run by the special school for pupils with pervasive language disorder and David's experience of a split placement). There appeared to be a number of reasons for this lack of success including poor communication between teachers on different sites, lack of 'ownership' of the project by mainstream teachers and transport and supervision difficulties. The only example of where such arrangements for partial integration had worked was at the Future Needs Unit in Division Q, where staff had invested a significant amount of time in ensuring that pupils spent part of their week in a neighbouring RC comprehensive. The arrangement was considered less than ideal for a range of practical reasons and the head teacher was very optimistic about the proposed move of the unit to another RC comprehensive where integration arrangements could be made more effectively.

Even though the advantages of special units are clear, we should not lose sight of the possible downside. Such arrangements were not, in all cases, popular with parents. Catherine's mother, for instance, had rejected the proposal that her daughter should move to a special unit attached to a mainstream school for her secondary education on the grounds that she needed a secure environment and might be more isolated in the unit than she was in the special school. Adam and Peter's behavioural problems appeared to be exacerbated in the special unit. In Division Q, placement in a special unit within a mainstream school was not an option for most pupils (an exception was Laura, who attended a primary school with a unit for visually impaired children, an arrangement which worked very well for her). However, in a number of cases, teachers in Division Q commented that a special unit within a mainstream school would have advantages over existing arrangements; such comments were made in relation to children placed either in special (June, Tony, Lesley, Anne) or mainstream (Sarah, Colin).

As noted above, there is a danger in assuming that special units attached to mainstream offer the perfect compromise and in the area of special needs there tend to be no ideal solutions. An education authority might find itself in the position of having to provide special schools, special units attached to mainstream and additional support in mainstream schools without units. Although such arrangements might appeal to parents, they would undoubtedly fail to find favour with the Audit Commission. They might also have negative implications for the large group of non-recorded pupils with special needs in mainstream, who might find few resources remaining to meet their needs, particularly in the context of devolved school management.

Summary

It is evident that placement in mainstream or special is not simply a function of a pupil's difficulties, but is inevitably affected by regional policy which dictates the balance between special and mainstream and the type of provision available in each sector. Regional policy is itself a result of a range of factors including geography, the beliefs of professionals and local politics. Parental wishes also play a major part in influencing placement, although it is evident that some parents were both more willing and able to assert their preferences . It is also clear that parents differed greatly in the things which they regard as important in their children's education, with some emphasising a secure environment, access to an academic curriculum, social integration and specialist teaching and therapy. Parents appeared to make their decisions in different ways, some relying more on informal networks and others on direct contact with teachers and other professionals. If the power of education authorities declines following reorganisation, it may be the case that (at least some) parents will exert an increasingly powerful influence over the nature of provision. Given their differing wishes, it appears that great diversity within systems will be required. As suggested above, the effect of this may be to concentrate resources even more on the small but growing group of children with Records of Need, at the expense of the very large group of non-recorded pupils with learning difficulties.

7
THE ACHIEVEMENT OF PUPILS IN MAINSTREAM AND SPECIAL SETTINGS

Introduction

In Chapter 1, we set out our research questions and this chapter is largely concerned with the third of these, that is, how effective are mainstream and special schools in meeting the academic and social needs of children with a range of difficulties? It is evident that debates continue over the advantages and disadvantages of mainstream and special school provision and it is tempting to believe that a quantitative study providing 'hard' measures of children's achievement in each setting, perhaps using multi-level modelling to take account of prior achievement, would answer these questions once and for all. We did not set out to undertake such a study, and before we describe our particular concerns it is worth considering why it would be extremely difficult to conduct a study of effectiveness in this way.

First, given the very wide variation in the difficulties experienced by children with special educational needs, it would be important to compare particular groups of children such as those with moderate learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties. However, as our study demonstrates, categories of difficulty are extremely hard to establish since the majority of children with special educational needs have multiple difficulties and category boundaries are often unclear. To illustrate the latter point, teachers considered that Sarah, one of our case study pupils had severe learning difficulties whereas her Record of Needs stated that she had moderate learning difficulties. Since children's difficulties may be difficult to categorise neatly, comparisons of groups would have to be treated with extreme caution.

Secondly, it would be very hard to obtain reliable 'input' and 'output' measures of achievement for large groups of children with special educational needs. This is partly because the achievement of some children, for instance, those with profound learning difficulties, is not easy to measure. Other children, like Lesley, who has autistic characteristics, are likely to achieve different scores on tests from one day to the next or simply to refuse to co-operate. Even if observational measures were used, a child like Kirsty, who has moderate learning difficulties, may have grasped a concept or skill on one day and have forgotten it by the next. For these reasons, measures of achievement would have to be treated with great caution. In addition to the practical difficulties, there are philosophical objections to the application of norm-referenced standards to children with special educational needs. Some educators believe that programmes of study and assessment for such children should be individualised and that assessments which would

enable comparisons across groups to be made should be resisted. Such disagreements are apparent in the reception of the 5-14 curriculum and Higher Still, which stipulate that they are relevant to all children. Some educators welcome the inclusion of children with special educational needs in national developments of this sort, whilst others regard them as unnecessarily restrictive. Our case studies reveal that whereas some children are assessed in relation to norm-referenced attainment targets, the progress of others is described in entirely individualised terms. The nature and severity of each child's difficulties is central to decisions about how he or she is assessed.

In addition to disputes over categories of difficulty, there are also disagreements over categories of placement. Some of our case study pupils who are based in special units are counted in Scottish Office statistics as being educated in the special sector, but are regarded by the school as being educated in the mainstream sector. It would appear, then, that problems of establishing categories of difficulty and placement and obtaining reliable data on achievement provide severe barriers to any quantitative study of the effectiveness of mainstream and special school provision. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, arguments in favour of special or mainstream provision are often based on the inculcation of particular values in pupils both with and without special educational needs. Defenders of special schools argue that they provide an environment in which each child is valued as an individual, but this is clearly difficult to demonstrate. Arguments provided by the Centre for Studies of Integration in Education regard integration as challenging prejudice and fear and fostering friendship. These are also aspects of children's development which are not easily measurable. Although some would criticise the lack of hard comparisons between the mainstream and special sectors, it is worth noting that very little attention has been paid to comparing the effectiveness of the comprehensive and selective school systems (Reynolds and Sullivan, 1987).

Case studies of individual pupils

As described in Chapter 1, we decided to look in depth at the experiences of a small number of pupils with a range of difficulties in mainstream and special school settings. We intended to make comparisons between the social and academic achievement of pupils with similar broad categories of difficulty both within and between sectors, whilst recognising each pupil's individuality both in terms of their problems and needs. In making these comparisons, we focused on the following variables which we felt were likely to influence these outcomes:

Opportunities to learn, for instance, specific features of the school or wider environment which were like to assist pupils in their social and intellectual development.

Disabling characteristics, for example Down's syndrome; autism; sensory, physical, speech and language or cognitive impairment.

Disabling circumstances which might reside in the home, community, peer group, or school. They might represent material, cultural or emotional deprivation or abuse of a physical, sexual or emotional nature.

Enabling features might be located within the school (e.g. access to learning support teachers, speech therapists) or in the family (emotional, academic or social support). They might include aspects such as modified curricula, individualised programmes or forms of assessment.

We begin by discussing groups of pupils in relation to these various aspects of achievement and subsequently draw out some general points concerning learning experiences and outcomes in specific contexts.

Pupils with physical difficulties

Malcolm, a fifteen year old with spina bifida and learning difficulties, attended a large all-through special school for children with a range of learning difficulties. He was expected to obtain SCOTVEC modules in a number of subjects. Having spent his entire educational career within the same school, Malcolm was at times bored by the familiar routines and tended to lack focus and concentration in his academic work. Much of his curriculum was now geared towards the acquisition of skills for independent adult life. Malcolm had participated in a work experience programme, and had been placed in the library of a nearby comprehensive. It was felt that this had done a great deal to enhance his self-esteem, but had confirmed his view that he would have found it difficult to cope in mainstream because of physical access difficulties. School staff thought he might have benefited from a greater degree of integration but they had found this difficult to arrange and only a small number of pupils spent part of their time in mainstream classes. Malcolm's teachers felt he could have applied himself more diligently to the academic side of the school programme. His parents, on the other hand, placed great value on the acquisition of skills for independent living and felt that academic achievement was rather irrelevant.

School and parents also disagreed on the emphasis which should be placed on independent mobility. At an earlier stage, the school felt that Malcolm should be

encouraged to walk using leg splints and elbow crutches. His parents, on the other hand, felt that their son was happy and reasonably independent using his wheelchair; attempting to walk was uncomfortable and difficult. Yet, they were pleased that the school nurse had helped Malcolm to manage his own catheterisation. He spent a considerable time with the nurse, not only attending to his own needs, but also assisting with the care of other pupils. This was regarded as an important part of his social development and, it was felt, had raised his self-esteem. Opportunities to develop social skills also occurred in the family and local community, for example, Malcolm accompanied his father and brothers to football matches .

Eleven year old Susan had cerebral palsy and was a wheelchair user. Her level of achievement was regarded as average but she had initially been placed in a special unit attached to a mainstream secondary. This was designated for 'very special children', that is, those with multiple difficulties. Subsequently, she moved to an SEN base within the attached primary school, spending about 60% of her time in the mainstream class. Susan's mother had invested considerable energy in pressurising the region to provide physiotherapy in the school and had eventually won her battle by making a complaint to the Secretary of State and threatening to publicise her case in the press. The staff felt that the physiotherapy and a visit to the Peto Institute in Budapest had been of only limited value, since Susan was still unable to walk. It was possible, they felt, that the more attainable goal of achievement in the academic arena had been jeopardised by focusing too narrowly on the physical. There was also some feeling that there would be more opportunities to learn if more time was spent in the mainstream class and less in the SEN base, where Susan lacked a peer group against whom she could measure her progress. Time out of the mainstream class also inhibited her social development, since she was treated as something of a celebrity by the other children instead of being accepted as a permanent class member.

Lack of communication within the school and between school and home appeared to be a problem. Susan's class teacher, a probationer, knew little of what was going on in the SEN base. In addition, she had never met Susan's parents to inform them of the work in which Susan was involved and the ways in which they could offer support. It appeared that discrepancies in educational goals between school and home (parents placing more importance on overcoming physical impairment whilst the school focused on academic achievement and social integration) were unresolved.

To summarise, Susan received extensive support from the physiotherapist allocated to the school, although the emphasis on tackling her physical problems was regarded as having negative consequences for her academic development. Susan's mother was a powerful

advocate, but again, it was felt that her efforts on her daughter's behalf were sometimes misplaced. Susan was described by teachers as 'charming' and she had made great progress during her time at school. Initially, it was noted, professionals had doubted whether she would ever be able to write or concentrate and there was now a good possibility that Susan would proceed to higher education. Malcolm had also made good progress in coming to terms with his physical impairment and developing his skills in social interaction. He might have achieved more academically in a more challenging environment, but parents and teachers disagreed over the priority which should be placed on the attainment of academic goals. The discrepancy of achievement between the two pupils probably reflected the differing nature of their difficulties and both illustrated the enabling and disabling features of their respective placements.

Pupils with moderate learning difficulties

Kirsty, aged eleven, was both enabled and constrained by the special school environment in which she had been placed. One of the more able pupils within the school, she was thought to have lacked the intellectual stimulation from peers which might have encouraged greater achievement. Yet the individual attention within the small group setting had helped her to progress and gain self confidence. Academically, she was described as working at pre-level A or level A and was acquiring a number of practical skills which would equip her for independent living. She continued to have problems in establishing meaningful relationships with pupils of her own age and her social development was further impeded by lack of any contact with children out of school. Kirsty's mother, a single parent, was pleased with her daughter's progress but had little awareness of what the school was trying to achieve.

Scott, aged twelve, had a medical condition but less significant difficulties than Kirsty. The medication he took to control this condition was suspected of interfering with his academic progress (for example by possibly affecting his short term memory). Despite this, Scott had progressed in language at a rate which was roughly comparable with the peers of his mainstream primary class. His achievement in mathematics, his area of greatest difficulty, was considered to be marginally behind (by approximately one year) that of his classmates. Scott's Record of Needs specified the amount of learning support he was to receive and his mother monitored its delivery carefully. He clearly benefited from the individual and small group learning support he received. His social relationships within the classroom were far less positive and he appeared very isolated. Scott himself mentioned being called 'brain dead' and his mother expressed dissatisfaction that bullying incidents had not been properly dealt with by the school.

For Kirsty and Scott, particular features of their school placement were enabling and others disabling. Access to a mainstream curriculum was facilitating his progress, whereas the absence of such a curriculum might have impeded Kirsty's development. Both pupils had a tendency to social isolation in their respective placements. The greater involvement of Scott's mother in the educational process represented an enabling feature for him which was not shared by Kirsty.

Graham, aged sixteen, who had spent most of his educational career within special school before transferring to a secondary school with a special unit, was considered to be unlikely to cope with a full time mainstream curriculum. For this reason, his time was divided (roughly evenly) between mainstream Standard Grade classes and the special unit. He attended mainstream classes in English, mathematics and history, where he was likely to obtain foundation level passes. Within these classes, additional learning support was provided. Another mainstream subject (drama) had been discontinued after staff observed signs of stress; they were more satisfied with the current balance. Although Graham said he preferred mainstream because there were more people, he rarely interacted with them. His peers either engaged in teasing or ignored him completely, a situation, which staff observed, contrasted with Graham's enthusiasm and effort within lessons.

Colin, aged fourteen, was placed in a mainstream secondary school with no additional learning support. His misbehaviour seemed to be the biggest impediment to his achievement and on three occasions this had led to exclusion. Unsure of the relationship between his learning difficulties and his tendency to misbehave as a displacement activity, staff felt limited in the support they could offer. In his first year of secondary school, he had been making progress in most areas of the curriculum. His greatest difficulty was in language but his progress in this area had been particularly marked. In S2, much of this had been overshadowed by his exclusion record and reports of difficult behaviour throughout the school. He did find success in physical education, however, and in this area his mainstream teacher encountered no behaviour problems. His relationships with his peers seemed very positive. There was a noticeable lack of communication, however, between school and home. Although Colin was described as unhappy and abusive at home, his parents felt there was a tendency for the school to impose overly harsh punishments. Colin's mother explained that she was concerned about her son's progress, but was too embarrassed (by his behaviour) to attend parents' evenings. Teachers, on the other hand, felt that the parents were unsupportive. This lack of communication was a disabling feature for Colin and there was a clear possibility that the worsening relationship between Colin, his parents and the school would eventually lead to his permanent exclusion.

Both Colin and Graham were in mainstream secondary schools but overall Graham, spending 50% of his time in a special unit, appeared to be achieving more academic success. Colin's misbehaviour was detracting from any progress he had made in the past and tension between home and school meant that his problems were not being addressed in any systematic manner. Graham was judged to be making good progress and to have adapted extremely well to the move from special primary to mainstream secondary. However, his attentive and enthusiastic behaviour had distanced him from his more 'streetwise' peers and his social development was therefore restricted. Colin's classmates, on the other hand, seemed accepting of his misbehaviour and they appeared to get on well together. However, the school was clearly not coping with Colin's challenging behaviour and the exclusions from school were depriving him of the opportunity to learn.

Pupils with severe learning difficulties

The achievement of Marie, aged eleven, was restricted within the special school she attended by her very limited cognitive ability, which made progress extremely slow. Her parents, who had themselves attended a special school, were thought to have given her insufficient encouragement to be independent, inhibiting her progress at school further. Marie's class teacher found it difficult to give her the support she needed and meet the needs of a very large range of abilities within her class. The teacher also felt that a lack of resources (particularly reading materials) and guidance on pre-level A attainment targets prevented her from helping Marie to achieve more. Although making very slow academic progress at school, Marie was described as happy and seemed to get on well with her classmates.

Sarah, aged thirteen, who attended a mainstream secondary school, was making little progress within the 5-14 programme and staff found it very difficult to give her the level of support they thought she required. In mathematics, she followed a specially individualised course; in other classes, staff had to try to adapt materials for her and they reported great difficulty with this. There appeared to be insufficient time available for learning support teachers to work with mainstream teachers on the task of course adaptation and the latter felt they were insufficiently equipped in experience and training to meet Sarah's needs. Unlike Adam and Scott, whose parents had insisted that a given amount of learning support be clearly specified and delivered, arrangements for Sarah appeared to be much more ad hoc. Her mother was considered by the school to have only a limited understanding of her daughter's problems and did not ask searching questions about the support which was being provided. Teachers felt they were containing rather than addressing her problems. The science teacher, for example, had expected Sarah to attempt the same science test as other pupils in the class and, to avoid exposing her to failure, sent her on an errand while she gave out the results. A rather more fruitful

strategy might have been to devise some means of assessment in which Sarah could have experienced success. Learning support staff felt she would have achieved more in a special school (or even a mainstream school with a special unit) because she would not 'straitjacketed' by the 5-14 programme in the way she was within mainstream. Staff said she was happy and got on well with her peers, but there was some suggestion that she had been bullied.

Marie and Sarah's difficulties presented the greatest barriers to their achievement and staff in both schools (special and mainstream) found it difficult to help them to progress within the 5-14 programme. Sarah's teachers seemed to find the mainstream curriculum constraining and inappropriate, and lacked either the knowledge, resources or will to adapt it for her. Marie's teachers, on the other hand suggested that she might have achieved more within her special school placement with better resources and support. For both Marie and Sarah, available provision was failing to optimise their opportunities to learn. They were both considered to be developing socially in their different environments.

Brian and Catherine, aged twelve, both had Down's syndrome. Brian had difficulties in all areas of the curriculum and had spent his primary years in the local mainstream school at the request of his articulate and well educated parents. He spent his mornings in an ante room between two classrooms with two other recorded children, working with a resource teacher and an auxiliary. Brian was able to carry out simple numeracy (counting to nine) and literacy tasks (he could read and write simple words). The school considered he was working at level A in language, progressing to B in some areas (e.g. talking) and level A in maths. Brian's social development was facilitated by his family, who treated him with warmth and affection, and by his close relationships with a small number of pupils in the mainstream class. Others tended to avoid contact with him and his behaviour was described as 'limits testing'.

Catherine, who had a heart condition, had spent her educational career in special school. As noted in the previous chapter, her mother devoted much time and energy to her daughter. She had rejected the option of a place in a special unit for Catherine's secondary education on the grounds that it would expose her to unnecessary danger, although she recognised the limitations of the curriculum available in the special school for older pupils. Concern about the limited resources of the special school's secondary curriculum was also expressed by Catherine's class teacher. Catherine was considered a competent reader and neat writer. She was less successful with maths, finding it difficult to comprehend basic concepts. Her teacher was unable to say how Catherine was performing in relation to the levels of the 5-14 programme since she was following an

individualised curriculum. Socially, Catherine appeared to get on well with the other children in the class but not to have any close friends. Her mother commented that even though efforts had been made to foster friendships at home, these were generally fairly limited.

Comparing Brian and Catherine's educational experiences in mainstream and special schools respectively, it appeared that both had benefited from the individual or small group tuition they had received. Catherine was making rather better progress in reading and writing, but not in maths or spoken language. Both had rather limited social interactions with the children in their class, although Brian had a close and affectionate relationship with a small number of pupils. Worries were expressed about the limited learning opportunities available to Catherine in the secondary section of her special school. Brian benefited from his supportive family; Catherine's mother was also greatly involved in her daughter's education, although she was regarded by the school as over-protective.

June, aged nineteen, was approaching the end of her career at a Future Needs unit. The curriculum was geared towards gaining skills for independent living, with the focus on functional numeracy and literacy, practical skills such as cooking, laundry and personal care, assertiveness training and health and safety. Within the latter category, a unit on sex education for young people with severe learning difficulties was being developed. The school did not consider it relevant to consider June's level of achievement in norm-referenced terms, but rather in relation to individualised goals relating to basic skills for independent living. They felt she was developing greater autonomy and work experience in a local DIY store had enhanced June's social skills and self confidence. Her mother, whom the school regarded as somewhat over-protective, took a less optimistic view of her achievement, believing that she would never be able to live or travel independently.
Tony, aged fifteen, also with Down's syndrome, was placed in the same Future Needs Unit as June. He was regarded as the unit's model pupil, mature, self-controlled and willing to support less able pupils. As noted above, the curriculum was geared towards skills for independent living and assessment was not norm-referenced. Tony had travelled to a nearby comprehensive school to participate in home economics classes. Supported by a peer tutor from the mainstream school, it was felt that he had made excellent progress. Teachers attributed Tony's success in large measure to his mother's determination to treat her son as normal, an approach which had initially been criticised by professionals as failure to adjust to his impairment. Neither June nor Tony were taking SCOTVEC modules, even though these had previously been offered by the school. Teachers explained that the school was receiving more pupils with pronounced

difficulties and they lacked resources to offer SCOTVEC modules to the few who would be able to benefit.

Teachers felt that it was inappropriate to compare June and Tony's achievement with that of their non-disabled peers, since the goals for them were individualised rather than norm-referenced and geared to the attainment of social independence. It was felt that both had made good progress towards such autonomy. However, staff believed that opportunities for integration would have been much greater had they been placed in a special unit within a mainstream school. At the time of the research, plans were afoot for such a move to take place and staff were certain that there would be benefits for mainstream pupils, in developing their social awareness and caring skills, as well as for the special unit pupils.

Of the four case study pupils with Down's syndrome, three were in special and one was in mainstream. Children with Down's syndrome tend to be placed in special settings and the justification of a curriculum focused on independent living is apparent. However, Brian's experience in mainstream alerts us to the potential advantages of such a placement, particularly in assisting social development by forging links with mainstream pupils and ensuring that a child remains firmly connected with his or her community.

Pupils with profound learning difficulties

For both Donald, aged fourteen, and James, aged twelve, achievements of a cognitive kind were limited and nowhere near level A in 5-14. Indeed, staff considered the 5-14 curriculum to be irrelevant for these two boys, although each had areas of achievement and enjoyment. For Donald this consisted mainly of practical activities in the kitchen (cooking, ironing, washing up, peeling potatoes and sewing) and in relation to music, swimming and horse riding. James' particular interest was music within a scheme to link it with language and he was able to sing with enthusiasm. He also had unexpected success on some pre-reading tasks. Neither of these boys had achieved any significant degree of social integration with the other pupils.

The opportunities to learn for Donald and James seemed to provide them with a broader scope than they were able to take advantage of in the light of their profound difficulties. Neither was able to make headway in the very simple academic tasks made available and both had plenty of opportunity through, for example, shopping experience or responsibility for dressing themselves after swimming, to develop personal and social skills. Although Donald's home circumstances were in many ways more supportive than James', in the sense of encouraging him to engage in normal family activities without being unduly protective, the actual achievements of the two boys were very similar and

progress seems to have had a very low ceiling placed on it by their impairments. Both these pupils appeared to be given relatively stimulating environments within their special schools but their profound difficulties, together with a tendency to seizures and autistic (or at least repetitive behaviour) features, were overwhelming hurdles to be overcome in striving for any achievement.

Pupils with specific learning difficulties

Adam, aged fifteen, had specific difficulties in addition to global learning difficulties. In his previous school, a mainstream secondary with a special unit, his achievement had been very limited and he had been socially isolated. His unhappiness had been expressed through over-eating and misbehaviour. Having moved, at his mother's insistence, to a more local mainstream secondary (with no base), he was making better progress. Benefiting from the additional learning support which his mother had pressurised the Regions into providing, Adam was likely to obtain Standard Grade foundation passes in English, mathematics, science and social and vocational skills. Science was the area in which he experienced greatest difficulty because of his motor difficulties, yet it was also his favourite subject and the one in which he was achieving most success, providing he had extra time to complete work and support within the class. His social interaction also seemed to be improving, through exposure to group discussion and joint tasks. His behaviour, however, had recently been disruptive, earning him regular punishment exercises from staff.

David, aged fifteen, had also transferred from a mainstream (primary) school, but he had moved into a special school. Considerable doubt remained as to whether his difficulties could be designated 'specific', since, in addition to dyslexic-type problems, he also experienced global learning difficulties and behavioural difficulties. He was achieving success within the school leavers' programme, which included work experience, but his reading and writing abilities remained very poor. Within the special school, he was confident and enjoyed the admiration of his peers. Outside school, however, he appeared unable to initiate successful social interaction and a split placement with a mainstream school was discontinued because of poor relations with pupils and staff. Staff were disappointed that his parents had not given him more responsibility to travel independently to school and felt that despite his apparent self confidence, he remained immature.

Adam and David were both regarded as having some of the characteristics associated with specific learning difficulties, but both also had global learning difficulties. Early experiences of mainstream had been negative for both, but while Adam had changed schools within the mainstream sector, David had transferred to a special school. Adam

appeared to be making better progress in his present mainstream school than he had done in his previous mainstream school with a special unit attached. David was one of the most able pupils in his special school and staff felt that he had the potential to make better progress if he were to participate in mainstream classes for certain parts of the curriculum. However, the arrangements for partial integration into mainstream had not been sustained because mainstream staff found David's behaviour too difficult to manage. Both pupils seemed to have difficulty interacting with mainstream pupils, and in David's case the response to this was to discontinue the split placement. Adam, on the other hand, seemed to be benefiting (by becoming less anti-social) from explicit attempts to encourage interaction.

Pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties

Peter, aged eleven, divided his time between a mainstream class and a special unit, although teachers felt he achieved more in mainstream. Staff tried to involve him in mainstream activities (e.g. group discussions and project work) in which he was likely to be successful and allowed him to concentrate on weaker subjects (e.g. mathematics) within the unit. Whilst in mainstream, he was said to have responded to the positive role models among his peers and engaged in less 'silliness' than he did within the unit. He appeared less confident in mainstream than in the unit, but seemed to prefer and to do better in the former setting. His mainstream peers were very supportive of him, praising any contributions he made and switching off from him when he behaved inappropriately. Despite this, he was rarely seen socialising with them at intervals, apparently preferring his own company or that of younger pupils. Peter's progress appeared to be hindered by poor communication between home and school. His father refused to believe that his son had behavioural difficulties and his mother had only a vague idea about the action which was being taken by the school.

Craig, aged thirteen, had experienced much unhappiness in his early life. He was now settled in long term foster care and was beginning to thrive within the special school he attended. His behaviour, much of which had been violent and destructive had improved, apart from a few setbacks, and he was making progress in language and mathematics. The Wellington Square reading scheme, which Brian's teachers had found very valuable, had also helped Craig's progress, according to his class teacher. His achievement was restricted, however, by his very poor concentration and he would often wander off in the middle of a task. Craig seemed to get on well with his classmates and staff said he was very popular within the school.

The difficulties experienced by Peter and Craig were primarily behavioural, but these were associated with cognitive learning difficulties and the combination presented

enormous barriers to their achievement. The behaviour of both pupils seemed to be improving. In Peter's case, this came through selective exposure to mainstream, particularly to the positive role models of behaviour; Craig, on the other hand, was being encouraged to behave better through the support of the special school staff and a more secure home environment.

Pupils with visual impairment

The academic achievement of Raschida, aged seventeen, was considerable and her exam passes at Higher and CSYS levels would enable her to move on to university. Her progress was interrupted slightly in S5 when, following a sudden and significant deterioration in her vision, she was constrained to learn Braille which she described as 'not unlike learning Russian for the first time'. Mathematics was a particular strength and her ability to carry out complex equations in her head both impressed and frustrated staff trying to prepare her for examinations. The support from specialist teachers of the visually impaired in every mainstream subject was crucial to her success. Raschida used the special unit as an area to study and to chat to friends at intervals as well as for learning Braille and tutorials. She was part of a wide social network of pupils, from both mainstream and the unit and seemed highly successful at managing her own disability, for instance, by finding her way around the school with apparent ease and refusing to use a long cane.

Fifteen year old Laura, like Raschida, was on her way to a university, but had yet to sit her Standard Grade exams. Her abilities spanned both science and language subjects and she worked very hard. Like Raschida, her vision had deteriorated recently, but she had not, as yet, learned Braille. She received support from the specialist teachers of the visually impaired in every class and tutorials in the unit. She also treated the unit as a social area as well as a source of support. She was a good friend of Raschida, but had many friends of her own within her S3 classes. Staff found her reluctant to participate in the occupational therapy, aimed at making her more independent, unless it took place away from home and school, as she thought it reinforced her disability.

Raschida and Laura appeared to be achieving a great deal of success in the mainstream secondary school. Few opportunities to learn were denied them, except when Raschida had to learn Braille in place of a subject at higher level. Their own management of their visual impairment seemed to make it less disabling for them, yet both pupils had to cope with a deterioration in their level of vision, proving highly stressful for both. The enabling role of the specialist teachers seems to have been significant to Raschida and Laura. As well as providing intensive, specialised support within classes, they were on hand to help the girls through their crises. Yet their very presence could interfere with

their social interaction and make great demands (in preparation) on the mainstream teacher.

Pupils with hearing impairment

Fiona, aged fourteen, had located herself within the hearing community (though one year older than her classmates). Her social interactions were very similar to those of her non-disabled peers. She was achieving at general level in Standard Grade, apart from modern languages, expressive language and some vocabulary. Outside school she had developed some horse-riding skills and hoped her future would lie in work with horses. Her integration into the hearing community was much more apparent than Gordon's. No doubt part of this was because her impairment was less severe, but the fact that other members of her close family had similar problems had provided models of optimism for her. In addition, the help she had received from learning support rather than the special unit in the school had helped to avoid her being labelled as special and so aided her image as just one more member of the group.

At age ten, Gordon's achievements were very high all round. He was two years ahead of his peers and had performed exceptionally well in all his subjects especially English, technology, mathematics and science. His understanding of language in different contexts, grasp of humour and breadth of vocabulary were quite exceptional. His problems related to immaturity, placed, as he was, with older children, and of a reluctance to communicate in the hearing world. Social interactions with hearing peers were minimal.

The greater severity of Gordon's impairment in comparison with Fiona's was clearly a factor in the differences in their social experiences. The special school had provided the conditions under which Gordon had been able to forge ahead academically. Had he remained in mainstream his distress with problems of communication suggest his achievements would have been far less. Paradoxically the conditions contributing to his academic successes had quite possibly also stifled his social progress into the hearing world. If a decision were made to place him in the academic residential school South of the border, he might be expected to continue to do well and to develop the oralist skills he would need in his future working life. On the other hand, there might be a slight doubt that he would continue to flourish so spectacularly once he was away from the security of his home and special provision. Perhaps his gifts were such that these problems could be overcome.

Pupils with language and communication difficulties

After spending time in two mainstream primary schools, latterly taught by her mother, Anne, aged seventeen, had spent her secondary education at a special school for pupils with pervasive language difficulties. The school had a full-time speech therapist and offered an intensive language environment. SCOTVEC modules and Standard Grades were not offered; instead the school provided an individualised programme geared towards the enhancement of communication skills and preparation for adult life. Apart from classes such as PE, Anne spent her time in a small group with a single class teacher. Although there were advantages in this situation in terms of building up intimacy, the class teacher, the headteacher and parents all felt that Anne suffered from the lack of a wider and more demanding curriculum. Anne was one of the few children in the school who did not have autistic features and, in some ways, opportunities for learning were limited by the more pronounced difficulties of the majority of pupils. For instance, she excelled in a range of sporting activities but no team games were offered, and although able to travel independently, she was not given the opportunity to do so because most pupils required constant supervision. The programme of integration with the local primary and secondary schools had been discontinued because it was felt that few pupils could benefit from such interaction. This, however, prompted a protest by parents who saw this as an important part of the school's programme which should be reinstated. Anne's parents were pleased with the progress she had made in speech, communication and social skills, but felt that the school could have developed her reading ability further. Indeed, Anne's mother had initially taught her daughter to read as a means of accessing spoken language; and overall it appeared that crucial educational input had come from the home rather than the school. Anne got on well with the pupils in her group and had one friend in the school with whom she had contact at weekends. However, Anne's social behaviour was sometimes immature; for instance, having invited a friend to the house, she might then ignore them.

Ten-year-old Lesley, unlike Anne, had autistic features but was very articulate and had a wide vocabulary. Her behaviour was erratic and literal-minded; for instance, a tantrum might result if she read a book which did not have 'The End' printed on the final page. Her mother had been told that it was impossible to provide an accurate picture of her ability because this was highly context-specific. She was attending the same special school as Anne and was also receiving support from the speech therapist. Lesley could read, although not necessarily with understanding, but her maths work was poor relative to her peer group. Her progress was not being considered in relation to the 5-14 programme; the aim of her class teacher was to encourage Lesley to do a small amount of specified work each day. There was some progress from the start of the year, when she had refused to participate in any class activity. Lesley did not interact at all with other

members of her group, although she did seek contact with adults. She expressed the view clearly that she did not want to be at the school and the headteacher and psychologist felt that the residential aspect of the placement had a negative effect on her social and academic development. Her mother had a different perception, feeling that the school had succeeded in socialising Lesley but that insufficient attention was paid to aesthetic areas such as music and drama. She would have liked her daughter to have received music therapy and was paying for private psychotherapy.

Comparing Anne and Lesley, it was evident that Anne's greater progress was due both to the lesser nature of her difficulties, which enabled her to access the available opportunities for learning, but also to the very high level of parental support she received. Lesley's greater difficulties meant that she was less able to benefit from enabling features such as the availability of speech therapy. Her class teacher had not been trained to meet the needs of autistic children and it is possible that Lesley would have benefited from more expert tuition. The residential placement, which was decided upon because of her difficult behaviour at home, meant that her links with the local community were broken.

Factors affecting achievement

The nature of the difficulties

Not surprisingly, it was evident that pupils' disabling characteristics were likely to affect both their academic and social achievement. Pupils who had physical or sensory difficulties occurring singly were liable to do better than those with cognitive or multiple difficulties. The case study pupils with sensory impairments were placed either in mainstream (Fiona), in special (Gordon) or in schools with special units (Raschida and Laura). All of these pupils were intellectually able and well integrated socially, developing a range of coping strategies to facilitate interaction with their non-disabled peers. It was evident that the specific nature of their difficulties required different levels of specialist input. Gordon, we noted, was benefiting from the academic tuition he was receiving in the school for the deaf, although this placement limited his contact with his hearing peers and, possibly, his social development. For all these children, the enabling features of their circumstances countered their disabling characteristics to an extent that they had rich educational experiences.

Pupils with multiple difficulties, for instance, moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties, were likely to encounter greater problems in both their social and academic development. Sarah, for example, who had severe learning difficulties but an amenable disposition, was being maintained within a mainstream school (albeit with an inappropriate curriculum). David, by way of contrast, was more

able than Sarah, but as a result of his behavioural difficulties, the mainstream school had decided to discontinue the split placement. Indeed, regardless of their ability, emotional and behavioural difficulties had an extremely negative effect on a pupil's opportunity to learn. Thus Colin, who was based in a mainstream school, had already been excluded on three occasions and, by failing to attend, was falling further behind his peer group. For these children, their multiple disabling characteristics, combined in some cases with disabling circumstances including social disadvantage, had resulted in restricted opportunities to learn and limitations on achievement.

It was evident that pupils with the most marked difficulties (for instance Donald and James) had problems in accessing the opportunities to learn provided by the school. Measuring the progress of these pupils, both socially and academically, was particularly challenging for the staff; very precise targets had to be set and learning had to be carefully monitored and reinforced. The disabling characteristics of these children, despite some clear enabling features of their school and home environments, were the crucial factors in limiting their opportunities to learn. For children with Down's syndrome, whose cognitive development was limited by their medical condition, achievement appeared to be influenced strongly by the expectations of parents and professionals (see following section).

The nature of the placement

Opportunities to learn varied between mainstream schools, special schools and special units. Special schools and units were characterised by the availability of expert tuition and specialised facilities. For instance, the school attended by Anne and Lesley had a full time speech therapist and offered an intensive language environment (although the less significant nature of Anne's difficulties meant that she was able to benefit more from these features). Malcolm's school had a full-time nurse and medical facilities to help him manage his impairment and Gordon had access to specialist teachers of the deaf. Specialised support was also likely to be available in special units, for instance the unit designated for visually impaired pupils and attended by Laura and Raschida offered them specialist tuition and emotional support, but also the opportunity to participate in a mainstream curriculum. Special schools, despite their enabling features such as small classes, specialist teaching and medical and therapeutic support, were somewhat limited in the nature of the curriculum they were able to offer pupils, particularly at the secondary stage (for example, Malcolm, Catherine and Anne were all suffering to some extent from restricted learning opportunities).

Sometimes, pupils placed in mainstream schools were able to benefit from specialist provision, but this often had to be fought for by their parents. For example, Susan

experienced the support of a physiotherapist in the special unit attached to the mainstream school following her mother's insistence that this should be provided, and Adam's mother was successful in persuading the Region to provide additional learning support. Some children in mainstream, however, such as Sarah and Colin, were clearly suffering from the lack of appropriate curriculum and support. This demonstrated how the enabling features for a pupil's opportunities to learn were dependent on both the educational provision in schools **and** family support. Limitations in either of these aspects could have a substantial effect on the child's achievement.

In terms of facilitating pupils' social development, some differences between mainstream and special sectors were apparent. It was felt that some pupils like Malcolm had blossomed in special school, since they were given the opportunity to take responsibility for themselves and to care for younger pupils. On the other hand, developing social competence and forging friendships continued to pose problems for some pupils such as Kirsty. In her case, the physical distance between home and school made friendships difficult to sustain. Some pupils were isolated in mainstream and in a number of cases bullying and teasing were reported. Scott, for instance, was called 'brain dead' by some pupils in his class and his mother felt that the school had failed to respond to allegations of bullying. This raises serious questions concerning the way in which mainstream schools deal with verbal abuse aimed at disabled pupils. Regions such as Strathclyde, Central and Lothian have established strict codes of practice for tackling racist incidents in school and perhaps similar procedures in relation to the abuse of disabled pupils would underline the unacceptable nature of such behaviour. For some pupils such as Brian, Fiona, Graham and Adam, their social development appeared to be facilitated by inclusion in mainstream schools.

Pupil achievement and the home/school interface

Parental involvement is highlighted as a distinctive feature of effective education for pupils with special educational needs (SOED, 1994) and our case studies provided clear examples of how this might operate. Anne's mother, for example, had provided the major breakthrough in her daughter's intellectual development by helping her to acquire speech through the written word. In the case of pupils with Down's syndrome, the powerful enabling influence of parents was apparent. Brian and Tony's parents were determined that their children would be treated as 'normally' as possible; both were well rooted in their local community and Tony was making excellent progress towards independent living. Catherine and June, whose mothers were more protective, appeared to have been given fewer opportunities for social development. The progress of other pupils such as Craig and Marie might well have been held back by lack of parental support.

Pupils' achievement is likely to be enhanced by clear communication from school to home on goals and outcomes. Special schools provided some examples of how such communication might operate, particularly in the cases of pupils who had little or no useful speech. In the case of Anne and Lesley, diaries were written on a daily basis to provide parents of a sense of the activities their child was involved in and the way in which they had behaved. Anne's mother described her daughter's teacher as being like a pen-pal and the communication was clearly direct and informative. In mainstream schools, there were examples of poor home/school communication. Although acknowledging his poor behaviour at home, Colin's parents felt that the school was victimising their son and failing to tackle his problems in any positive manner. His mother explained that the reason she did not attend parents' evening was not because of lack of interest, as the school believed, but because she felt that she would be too upset by the negative reports she would receive. In the case of Peter, with emotional and behavioural difficulties, there was not only a lack of communication between home and school but also between parents.

It would be inaccurate, however, to characterise all communication between parents and special schools as good and to conclude that all mainstream schools were communicating poorly. As we noted in the previous chapter, many parents of children in special schools (e.g. those of Malcolm and Kirsty) felt that education was the concern of the school and they had only a vague idea of the precise goals which the school was pursuing. As we commented in the previous chapter, the parents who had the closest involvement were those who felt that the school was failing to provide sufficient resources to facilitate their children's development (e.g. Susan, Adam and Scott, all of whom were in mainstream). Such involvement might have been effective in gaining additional learning opportunities for individual children, but it was extremely uncomfortable for the professionals involved.

Pupil involvement and achievement

The Scottish Office has underlined the point the 'children have a natural right to be consulted and, as appropriate, involved in the resolution of issues which affect their schooling'. (Scottish Office Education Department, 1994: 16). Our case studies indicated a widespread belief in the link between, on the one hand, pupil happiness and motivation and, on the other hand, achievement. A number of parents commented that their children would fail to learn unless they were happy and relaxed at school. June's mother, for example, said that her daughter only agreed to attend the Future Needs unit because she enjoyed her experiences there. Staff were aware that pupils in the 16+ age group attended on a voluntary basis and therefore had to be given the chance to make major decisions in relation to their learning programme like other young people. Some pupils

conveyed their unhappiness through their refusal to engage with the learning process within the school and parents were often sensitive to such signals. Adam's mother, for instance, had moved her son out of a special unit and into a mainstream school when it became evident to her that he was failing to make progress. Lesley's case was more complex. She insisted that she disliked the residential special school and wished to return to her home and her former school. Both her parents, and the school, however, felt unable to support her in the local community and it was evident that these opposing interests were difficult to reconcile.

Summary

On the basis of our case studies, it would be difficult to claim that either special or mainstream schools are more effective for particular groups of children. Indeed, our work conveys a clear sense of the complex interaction between the child's own characteristics and his or her learning environment. Although our groupings of case study pupils had certain broad features in common, they also had many idiosyncratic traits and, of course, it is impossible to compare the outcomes of the same child's education in different locations. Nonetheless, we are able to identify the learning opportunities which may be available in particular sectors. Special schools, it appears, can have the advantages of expert teachers and specialised facilities accompanied by important knowledge of features such as curriculum adaptation, assessment and communication with parents. Mainstream schools, on the other hand, can enable a child to retain contact with the local community, provide role models of 'normal' behaviour and a full curriculum. Special units can provide specialist tuition and facilities, accompanied by access to the mainstream curriculum but may involve many children having to travel some distance from their home. Given the commitment of most education authorities in Scotland to mainstream education or education in 'the least restrictive environment' policy questions will have to be addressed as to the changes which will be required in different locations to enable children with a wide range of difficulties to develop as far as possible both academically and socially. We address these issues more fully in our concluding chapter. In Chapter 8, we consider the training needs of staff in mainstream and special schools.

8
THE TRAINING NEEDS OF TEACHERS AND OTHER STAFF

Introduction

The changing pattern of provision in both mainstream and special schools is likely to have significant implications for the training needs of staff. This chapter explores the ways in which different people construed the training needs of teachers and others in schools, in relation to children with special educational needs. We begin by reporting regional officers' views of the training needs of teachers and other staff. The perceptions of these individuals are important since they control access to in-service training. We then switch to the teachers and report on what those involved in the case studies identified as their own training needs. In Chapter 9, we comment on how these needs relate to the availability of provision and on more general training issues, arising from a report prepared by Moray House Institute consultants. Here, we focus on perceptions of training needs.

Education authority officers' views of training needs

The training needs identified by education authority personnel were of four kinds:

- **general** training to support staff in meeting pupils' special educational needs
- training to help staff **take account of changes in the pupil population** being catered for
- training to support the **strengthening of relationships** among professionals
- the extension of training to **target a wider range of staff**.

A majority of officers made some comment on the training needs of staff, but there appeared to be no difference in patterns of response among the three groups interviewed. A range of staff were seen as having training needs:

- mainstream teachers
- learning support staff in mainstream schools
- special school staff.
- senior management
- special needs auxiliaries
- ancillary staff eg office staff, janitors

Respondents did not comment on each of the groups, but focused on the staff whose needs were viewed as most salient. Most of the comments on training highlighted the needs of mainstream staff, who were seen as most affected by changes in the

placement patterns of children with special educational needs. Ancillary staff had been identified as new targets for training and the changing context of special educational needs provision had altered the focus and nature of training for all staff involved.

Changing patterns of training needs

Four main changes in placement patterns were seen as altering the training needs of staff providing for pupils with special educational needs. The first of these concerned the apparent increase in the numbers of children with SEN being taught in mainstream schools. This meant that more teachers encountered such children and, therefore, needed to be equipped to cater for them. A second change related to the nature of the difficulties experienced by children in mainstream schools. These were reported as changing to include more individuals with severe difficulties, such as those which might be associated with Down's syndrome, and children with multiple difficulties. The third change affected special school staff who had also encountered differences in the difficulties experienced by children they provide for. As in the case of mainstream schools, these difficulties were described as more severe and multiple than those encountered previously. Some of the children being provided for in special schools may, in the past, have been in hospital schools, residential schools, or may not have survived to school age. The final change concerned the extended range of needs which special schools may have had to meet. As well as children with more severe or multiple difficulties, special school staff may also have had to continue to make provision for children with moderate difficulties, whose parents may still favour a special rather than a mainstream school placement or for whom alternatives may be considered inappropriate by the education authority.

The general training needs identified for staff in mainstream schools were said to be similar to those of the last ten years, but had intensified with the increase in numbers of pupils with special educational needs being placed in mainstream schools. In addition, regional officials accepted that they could not place the responsibility for training mainstream staff solely on the shoulders of learning support staff.

Respondents conveyed, therefore, a general sense of being in a period of change, with some staff, particularly mainstream teachers, not having yet responded to the demands of the 1980's. Some of the training needs were said to be already being addressed, either through the region's in-service programme or provision offered by colleges of education. However, over half of the respondents (21) commented that it was impossible to keep pace with the numbers of staff requiring training. Other

training needs had been identified relatively recently and suitable provision was still being explored.

There was some concern that the introduction of devolved school management might threaten staff development. Officials were aware that in some authorities in England and Wales, schools had reduced their spending on training for special educational needs since the introduction of LMS and envisaged a similar pattern in Scotland. One adviser described the region's plans to address this issue, by making training for SEN an integral part of teachers' conditions of service:

> A major difficulty in SEN and DSM will be staff development - this was an important recommendation from the review and I think it is going to be difficult to devolve induction and qualifying courses to schools because only the big schools could afford it. So we will recommend that this becomes part of conditions of service . . . This is important to maintain teachers' expectations in mainstream schools.

Support for this proposal was to be sought from SOED.

Training needs of particular groups

Mainstream teachers

Eight directorate officials, eight principal educational psychologists and four advisers emphasised the need for every mainstream teacher to undergo some form of **awareness raising training**, sensitising them to issues of **integration and individual needs**. The **curriculum and differentiation**, particularly in relation to the 5-14 programme, was seen by five advisers, three directorate officials and one principal psychologist as an important training need. Training to develop **skills in teaching pupils with particular needs**, for example communication difficulties or hearing impairment, was identified by four advisers, two directorate officials and one principal psychologist. Staff development aimed at general **confidence building** was also mentioned.

The kind of training required by mainstream teachers dealing with children with more severe or multiple difficulties was largely of the kind described above. An adviser stressed the need to ensure that:

> Mainstream staff get training through their own subject specialism. If learning support and the learning support adviser has too high a profile in delivery, it is very easy for mainstream teachers to say "this hasn't got anything to do with me".

Mainstream teachers' staff development needs were said to be heightened where relatively large numbers of children with severe or multiple difficulties were concentrated in one school or if staff were encountering a pupil with SEN for the first time. The increased incidence of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties in mainstream schools had also created a need for training in **behaviour management**.

Learning support staff in mainstream schools

There was widespread acceptance among those interviewed that the needs of learning support teachers were being addressed through diploma and certificate programmes or other in-service provision. This is interesting, given the fall in numbers being released to attend the diploma on a full-time basis. The main priority, as far as regional officers were concerned, was to enable as many learning support teachers as possible to undergo training. There was some acknowledgement, however, that learning support teachers could benefit from the expertise, particularly in assessment, thought to be possessed by special school staff.

Special school staff

Teachers in special schools were reported as needing to develop particular areas of expertise, for example in **autism, specific learning difficulties or communication disorders**. As well as enabling them to meet the needs of the children with such difficulties within special schools, it was envisaged that this expertise might eventually be made available to mainstream schools. The training needs arising from increases in the range of difficulties provided for in special schools were described as more complex. Many schools now also catered for a wide age range and the main difficulty for special school staff was said to be providing **adequate breadth and balance in the curriculum**. This was further compounded in schools with relatively small rolls and few teaching staff. Training was seen as likely to address these needs only to a limited extent. Improving the **links between special and mainstream schools** and strengthening the opportunities for **exchange between pupils and staff in both settings** was thought to be a more feasible solution and was described as already well developed in the majority of regions with special schools.

Knowledge about particular learning difficulties, developing individual programmes and **assessing progress** were regarded as valuable skills which special school staff could pass on to their mainstream colleagues. Special school teachers were thought to require training in **consultancy** if they were to be seen as credible in this role. They were also described as needing to gain a greater **familiarity with the mainstream curriculum**.

Senior management

Headteachers and senior management of mainstream schools had already been the focus of staff development for special educational needs, as part of whole school approaches to provision. However, they were seen as having greater training requirements, in the light of increases in mainstreaming. The introduction of devolved school management was thought also to have led to a need to reinforce through training their **responsibility for meeting pupils' special educational needs**. They were said to require training in the **management and deployment of staff** in such a way as to benefit as many pupils as possible and to **minimise the distinction between recorded and non-recorded children**. However, the failure to take up any places on a certificate course on the management of SEN, offered by one institution, suggests that there is still a long way to go before special educational needs features as a priority among the training needs of schools' senior management. Little mention was made of the training needs of senior management of special schools.

Special needs auxiliaries

Regional officials recognised the central role of special needs auxiliaries in making provision for particular children with special educational needs and saw the need to provide them with **basic awareness training**. A number of officers commented that the auxiliaries could often be crucial to the success of integration, because of their close contact with individual children. Training in **planning and implementing programmes of work** and in **the curriculum generally** was identified as important, to enable them better to appreciate the teacher's strategies and to provide appropriate support. Guidance on the new **EC guidelines on manual handling** was also identified as a training need for auxiliaries.

Ancillary staff

Support staff within schools, for example office and janitorial staff, were identified as targets for **awareness training**. This had emerged from a concern for 'normalisation' of special educational needs provision and was aimed at ensuring, as one adviser commented, that all staff 'understand it is the children's right to be there and that help will be available'.

Professional partnerships

Considerable emphasis was placed, mainly by directorate officials, on the need to improve existing links between special and mainstream schools. As well as providing greater opportunities for **pupils from special schools to experience a broader and more balanced curriculum**, it was thought it would also enable **special school staff to share their expertise with mainstream schools**. Little mention was made of the

benefits special school staff might gain through association with mainstream colleagues.

Training was also seen as important to improve working relationships within mainstream schools. Three psychologists, two members of the directorate and two advisers reported a need for training aimed at **strengthening working relationships between mainstream and learning support teachers and auxiliaries**. Headteachers and senior management were seen as the most important targets for training of this kind, because of their role in providing opportunities for consultation.

Teachers' views of their own training needs

In the case studies of mainstream and special schools, teachers were asked to identify their own training needs, especially in relation to the children we had shadowed. In addition, headteachers or other senior management figures were asked for their views on the training needs of staff in relation to SEN.

Mainstream teachers

About four fifths of this group (18 out of 22) identified a range of training needs, which they felt would help them to meet individual pupils' needs more effectively. The most common training needs were:

- information on individual difficulties or conditions
- time to investigate a child's individual needs or discuss these with staff
- opportunities to see children with similar difficulties being taught in different settings
- visits to other establishments (especially special schools or units)
- visits from 'experts'
- simulation exercises (eg of sensory difficulties)

Interestingly, several teachers indicated that the resources and expertise were available within the school (for example from learning support staff), but lack of time prevented them from gaining access. A lack of information (or of opportunities to acquire this) had made three of the primary teachers particularly nervous. They taught children with physical difficulties and were afraid that they might be 'doing something wrong'. Teachers wanted contact with 'experts', who may be in their own schools, special schools or who may have had experience in teaching children with similar kinds of difficulties. A number of teachers commented on the difficulty of providing training which addressed specific training needs (relating to one child) but which was not 'irrelevant' to other children:

> Training would need to be general, because if it was too specific to Adam it would only help this year and not with children with different kinds of needs. Specific help for him would be useful, though.

One teacher took the view that the infrequent passage of SEN pupils through his department and the existence of specialists within the schools made training for mainstream staff unnecessary:

> We only get so few of them, that whether it would be justified in training others when you've already got a specialised unit, I don't know.

Staff found simulation exercises, relating to both visual and hearing impairment very helpful in sensitising them to the conditions experienced by individual pupils. However, they said this needed to be repeated on a regular basis.

Learning support staff in mainstream schools

Some of the learning support teachers (and specialist teachers of the visually impaired) had yet to undergo diploma training and they considered this a particularly pressing need. Those who had done this said they would welcome additional training, to enable them to maintain their expertise and respond to changes in the SEN population. Beyond this, learning support staff identified specific needs:

- opportunities to interact with colleagues from special schools or from other mainstream schools
- areas of SEN in which staff had no previous experience (eg language/communication difficulties, autism)
- counselling for pupils and parents
- technology relating to particular SEN, eg visual impairment
- specialist skills eg Braille

In two of the schools with SEN units, there was a queue of learning support staff waiting to enter the diploma training programme. Training for these teachers was considered to have priority over the needs identified in the above list. The diploma training was regarded as the absolute minimum to enable staff to function effectively within school(s).

Some learning support teachers focused on their role as training **providers**. Specialist teachers of the visually impaired in one secondary school had been particularly successful in this context (according to them and mainstream staff). However, most

of the learning support staff interviewed seemed to find it difficult to 'get through' to their mainstream colleagues. Surprisingly, however, consultancy or working with colleagues did not feature among their list of training needs.

Special school staff

Only two of the seventeen special school teachers interviewed argued that they had reached a certain age where experience, rather than training, enabled them to function effectively. The rest considered themselves to have a wide range of training needs.

- curriculum developments, eg 5-14, TVEI and SCOTVEC
- more severe and complex SEN
- opportunities to see children with similar difficulties being taught in different settings
- opportunities to exchange curriculum materials, especially at pre-level A
- life skills for pupils with severe and complex SEN
- assessing and reporting progress
- technology
- teaching skills relating to the education of deaf pupils (eg sign language).

Opportunities to see children with similar difficulties being taught in different settings was suggested by both special school and mainstream staff as something that might help them to meet the needs of children in their own class. Several special school teachers were highly critical of the role subject advisers in relation to training and, as we reported in chapter 3) offering more general support.

Senior management

Headteachers and other members of senior management in mainstream schools expressed the view that all staff (themselves included) needed to increase their awareness of SEN issues. Beyond that, they had little to say about their own training needs. Only one headteacher (of a primary school) indicated a need for more detailed information on particular kinds of SEN and for outreach from special school staff. The priority for training, as far as mainstream senior management was concerned lay with classroom teachers. This group required training to help them to respond to changes in the SEN population and the following particular needs were identified:

- raising awareness of the range of SEN and the nature of the learning difficulties experienced
- class management strategies to take account of pupils with SEN
- report writing and preparation for Records of Needs review meetings

- opportunities to see children with similar difficulties being taught in different settings
- outreach from special schools

Once again, opportunities to see children with similar kinds of difficulties was mentioned as an important training need. A number of headteachers indicated that mainstream teachers were already doing a good job, but felt somewhat beleaguered by the changes in the SEN population. Training needed to help them feel more confident that they possessed the skills to meet particular children's needs effectively. Part of this, said one headteacher, would come from meeting other mainstream teachers in similar situations.

Priorities for senior staff in special schools were, they thought, broadly similar to those they identified for their staff:

- curriculum developments
- technology
- opportunities to interact with colleagues from other special and from mainstream schools

In addition, the headteachers considered training in preparation for DSM to be an important need.

Training in the context of policy changes

In Chapter 3, we considered the collective impact of the main policy innovations (parental choice, 5-14, DSM and local government organisation) on SEN provision. At this stage we can only speculate on how training for SEN provision will be affected, since it is not clear what the financial and administrative arrangements for training are likely to be.

If training budgets for SEN are devolved to schools, it is impossible to predict how headteachers will respond, but they may identify more pressing training priorities for staff (as they appeared to have already done for themselves). They may, however, be well placed to identify training needs and to select from a range of sources of provision. Even if they do not control funding for SEN training, they are obviously key figures in supporting access to it and encouraging teachers to develop expertise.

Training which is supported financially by the new authorities may be too limited in amount and scope to meet the demands outlined in the chapter. On the other hand,

the new authorities may be encouraged to smarten up their provision to enable them to compete with other training providers. This might be especially welcome to special school staff who felt unsupported, particularly by subject advisers.

Finally, higher education institutions appear to be experiencing considerable change, following the introduction of the Education (Grants for Further Training for Teachers and Educational Psychologists etc) (Scotland) Regulations 1993 (SOED, 1993c). Like everyone else, institutions of higher education face uncertainty about how training will be affected by changes in local government and the management of schools. In addition, training for learning support staff is moving in the direction of modularisation, requiring greater flexibility from the providers. No longer can institutions depend on a steady flow of participants responding to their offerings. Even where their provision matches the needs of staff, consultants from Moray House Institute have alerted us to problems of uptake, particularly among mainstream staff. Furthermore, institutions will have to compete for (possibly diminishing) resources among themselves and against an increasing number of training 'consultants'. Their survival will depend on how well (and how quickly) they can respond to what those who hold the budgets **think** staff training needs are. This may or may not coincide with the reality for the staff concerned.

Summary

Regional officers saw the changes in the size and character of the SEN populations in mainstream and in special schools as having major implications for the training needs of staff. Those in schools who had experienced these changes agreed.

Education authority officers indicated that mainstream teachers required training which focused on awareness raising, integration and individual needs, curriculum and differentiation, skills tailored to some of the specific needs of pupils, and general confidence building should have priority. Mainstream staff were clearly the prime concern for policy makers. This may have reflected a realisation that the demands on learning support staff to act as consultants to all mainstream teachers, whilst fulfilling several other roles, are unrealistic. Mainstream teachers in the case studies tended to focus on training which would help them to meet the needs of particular children (asking, for example, for information about specific conditions) and to feel more confident. Many seemed to think that this kind of support was available within school (or easily accessible from elsewhere) and simply needed to be given the opportunities to make the most of it. However, the allocation of time for staff development, even if the training is carried out in-house, clearly requires additional resourcing.

Regional officers had very little to say about the training needs of learning support teachers. Here they relied on provision through the formal diploma and certificate opportunities, and looked forward to increasing interactions between learning support and special school staff. Learning support staff felt that the changing SEN population within mainstream schools had increased the demands on them. They clearly saw themselves as having additional training needs, not catered for within the diploma and certificate programmes, to enable them to make an effective response.

Special school staff were regarded by education officers as having three training priorities. First, emphasis was put on highly specialised areas of knowledge and competence, such as expertise in autism, specific learning difficulties and communication disorders. Secondly, the current concern with all young people's entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum was seen as a continuing focus for special school teachers. Thirdly, ways of developing links with mainstream schools, and of sharing knowledge about learning difficulties and assessment processes, were viewed as a crucial focus in staff training. The special school staff agreed that these were important and added that they would welcome opportunities to exchange curriculum materials, especially at pre-level A and training in promoting life skills for pupils with severe and complex SEN.

Regional officers identified devolved school management as a further impetus for the training of headteachers and senior mainstream staff. They argued that the focus of such training should be on the reinforcement of senior management's responsibility for meeting pupils' special educational needs, associated management and deployment of staff and the minimisation of distinctions between recorded and non-recorded children. Local authority officers made virtually no comments about senior management in special schools. Headteachers in mainstream schools seemed to regard any training in this area as having a low priority beside the needs of mainstream staff. In contrast, senior management in special schools identified a list of needs for themselves (including DSM) and their staff.

The training of auxiliaries has tended to be seen in the past as a separate element rather than an integral part of staff development programmes in special educational needs, and the training of ancillary staff (office and janitorial) has hardly been considered. Both groups are now seen as important elements in programmes of support, and basic training on awareness of special needs received firm support. In addition, auxiliaries were said to need preparation for planning and implementation of programmes of work for children with various kinds of difficulty, guidance on the EC guidelines on manual handling and information about the curriculum generally.

Overall, there appeared to be two urgent aspects of training in the minds of education authority personnel and staff within mainstream and special schools. First, training of the largest group involved in provision for special educational needs, that is mainstream teachers, was called for; this seemed to be regarded as too great a burden for learning support teachers, with consultancy as just one of their roles, to take on by themselves. Within the case study schools, all staff (including the mainstream teachers themselves) agreed that this was the main priority for training. Education officers also emphasised the importance of developing existing and new links between the mainstream and special sectors was seen as crucial in furthering entitlements for pupils with learning difficulties and generating new areas of expertise among mainstream teachers and auxiliaries. Staff in both mainstream and special schools also envisaged benefits from links of these kinds. It was interesting, however, that mainstream staff thought that the immediate help they required (relating, for example, to individual pupils) existed within their school (as well as beyond) but they did not always find it accessible to them.

Finally, in line with wider government policy, training for staff in the area of special educational needs is taking place in the context of the market. Higher education training providers are competing for clients with education authorities and individuals in the private sector. Early fears have been raised about the quality and coherence of these changes. Bearing in mind the gradual move towards the inclusion of more children with SEN in mainstream schools, training will clearly require careful monitoring in the future.

9

PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Introduction

In Chapter 1 six broad research questions were identified (p14-15) and these have guided the research into national statistics, the views of education authority officers and case studies of authorities, schools, pupils with special educational needs and their parents. In this chapter the findings from these data are brought together under five broad headings concerned with patterns of placements, issues of cost, provision in mainstream and special settings and the role of parents. A sixth section draws together findings on training needs. These findings are primarily those reported in Chapter 8 but they also draw on a report prepared for this research project by consultants Alison Closs and Marianna Buultjenns (1995, unpublished) of Moray House Institute. The last section points to some conclusions about trends for the future. Various implications for SOED, education authorities and schools, in the light of the research findings and in the context of local government reorganisation, are listed in Chapter 10.

The placement of children with SEN in mainstream and special schools

One of the recurring warnings throughout this report has been a reminder that not everyone interprets placement in the special (or mainstream) sector in the same way. For example, the case study authorities in this research have favoured closing special schools and opening special units in mainstream. This provides much greater opportunities for some pupils to spend some, or even most, of their time in mainstream. For the purposes of SOED statistics, however, children with an attachment to a special unit are counted as being placed in the special sector (Chapter 4); thus a trend of some substance towards mainstream provision in these authorities would be reflected in observations taken on the ground, but not in the statistical analysis. Where we can, we will endeavour, therefore, to distinguish among mainstream, mainstream with special units and special schools. We hope that, in the future, the Scottish Office will consider making similar distinctions in its collection of statistics.

Regional policies have shown some variation in their commitment to integration. In general, they have endorsed greater use of mainstream provision for pupils with special educational needs, but the views of education authority officers have tended to favour the retention of at least some schools in the special sector. Indeed, a significant proportion of the professionals interviewed were sceptical about a policy that promoted ever more integration; this scepticism was more apparent among SEN advisers. Decisions about placements were not, of course, just a matter of applying a

straightforward policy; pressures to accede to parental preferences for placements and to work within financial constraints introduced added complexity.

National policy, as expressed in the 1978 Scottish HMI report (SOED, 1978: the most recent 1995 HMI report had not yet been published when the regional policies were prepared) and by Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (as amended), did not address directly the matter of inclusion of pupils with SEN in mainstream education. The regions' enthusiasms for integration into mainstream were, with some exceptions, also somewhat muted and tended to convey as the main priority the notion of an entitlement for all pupils of a broad and balanced curriculum. The argument for pupil entitlement did not lead inevitably to a preference for mainstream provision; the right of parents to choose placements for their children was acknowledged in all the policies and there was a relatively widespread acceptance that for some young people special schools were the settings that could most effectively meet their needs. Indications that Scottish Office views were in some accordance with this came from the Minister, Lord James Douglas-Hamilton, in an address to the National Association for Special Educational Needs (8 May 1993). He suggested that he expected special schools to be a continuing necessary element of the pattern of provision for SEN. The mainstream case study schools gave accounts of their policies that were largely in line with the 1978 Scottish Office statements about desirable patterns of provision. The special schools among the case studies, however, were very willing to describe how they could do all that was expected of mainstream and more in, for example, the 5-14 programme. It was noteworthy, however, that staff in both mainstream and special schools were experiencing considerable difficulty in meeting the expectations of 5-14 for children with SEN.

The national statistics have shown that following a decrease of nearly 60 per cent over a decade and a half, the special school population has remained relatively stable since 1991. This population includes, of course, both special schools **and** special units within mainstream schools. Because the data from education authorities indicated that special units were being developed with the intention of replacing special schools, the stability of the special sector population as a whole suggests that increasing proportions of pupils with special educational needs were being located in mainstream schools (within spec units). It is important to be clear, however, that the extent of the contact that pupils in special units have with mainstream pupils and classes can show great variation, depending on the policies and practices of regions, schools and the units themselves.

The analysis of the **mainstream** school population, apart from special units, indicated an overall upward trend in the number of pupils with a Record of Needs; over the last decade the proportion of recorded pupils in mainstream has increased by a factor of eight. This continuing increase of recorded pupils in mainstream has to be set alongside the relative stability, over the last five years, of the proportion of the general population of pupils who are educated in special schools or units. This suggests that the current rise in the figures for mainstream must reflect an increase in the level of recording. This increase has been around 1,000 pupils each year.

Mainstream schools have received, therefore, increasing numbers of pupils with identified special educational needs, some of whom were within special units and others in mainstream classrooms. One effect of this was that the mainstream population had come to include pupils with more severe or multiple difficulties who might previously have attended special schools (eg pupils with Down's syndrome).

At a general level, the populations of special schools had changed in two ways. First, pupils with more severe or multiple SEN, who previously might have attended hospital and residential schools or might not have survived to school age, were now included. Secondly, perhaps because of the reduction in the numbers of special schools and financial considerations, remaining special schools had received pupils with a broader range of special needs. They stretched from those with profound problems to those with only mild to moderate learning difficulties. Placements in special schools of those among the latter category were still higher than might have been expected. Sometimes this resulted from parental decisions; in other cases, these pupils had multiple SEN often involving emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Looking towards the future, and prior to local government reorganisation, neither education authority officers nor elected council members (the latter interviewed only in the two case study authorities) saw threats to provision for children with a Record of Needs arising from Devolved School Management schemes per se. Several aspects of such schemes' provision (eg centralised Psychological Services) had remained with the authorities, and the change in the locus of decision making about other aspects of resources and financial monitoring was seen as advantageous to schools. For pupils **without** Records, however, the predictions are far from clear; there are very obvious dangers of a dichotomy of `haves' and `have nots', given that the promises of resources related only to recorded pupils.

Trends for the future were less easy to disentangle for DSM in isolation. As we shall see, it was expected to be overshadowed by the effects of local government

reorganisation, especially in the new smaller unitary authorities. Comparisons with England suggested that a combination of a heavy emphasis on a culture of achievement, together with the placement of financial decision making in the hands of school governors (through Local Management of Schools), had done little to encourage the acceptance and retention of pupils with learning difficulties in mainstream settings. In particular, those with emotional and behavioural difficulties in some areas had been rather more readily excluded than was the case in the past. There was clearly a possibility that mainstream schools in Scotland, under pressure to market themselves to parents, would find it difficult to retain some of those with SEN. From other research in this Department, we are aware of a reluctance on the part of schools to advertise themselves as specialising in learning difficulties.

In contrast with the effects of existing DSM, the impact of local government reorganisation in 1996 was expected to be considerable. It was difficult to predict with any precision the effect on policies for, and levels of, integration. However, three broad features of the forthcoming system were emphasised by education authority officers and elected members. First, the smaller size and reduced budgets of many of the new unitary authorities were likely to make it much more difficult to provide the multi-agency support to meet the special needs of individual pupils, to provide a full range of services within the authorities and to finance provision outwith the authorities' area. Secondly, the new councils (which may have substantial numbers of elected members and officers with only a District Council background and so no experience of responsibility for education) might have little understanding of special educational needs and favour rather different policies from the current ones in this area. Thirdly, the fragmentation of the system might result in existing specialist schools facing an uncertain future, parental applications for their choices of schools becoming more difficult as new boundaries cut across catchment areas, and schools (especially if they decide to opt-out of education authority control) being unwilling to allocate resources to SEN if those resources are no longer ring-fenced. The concerns for the vulnerability in the existing system of pupils **without** a Record were considerably increased as education authority personnel looked forward to reorganisation. Perhaps the most important matter overall was the pessimism about the capability of the smaller councils to **develop** services. It was clear that in the area of integration there was still a long way to go in generating new ideas and policies and testing them out in practice. The year from April 1995 to April 1996, the period of hand-over, was seen as unlikely to take the system forward significantly. Optimism for the future beyond that was hard to find.

This research focused on pupils with a Record of Needs and the case studies provided some elaboration of the patterns of placement (see Chapter 6). As might be expected, pupils with the greatest cognitive difficulties were, for the most part, placed in special schools but with some exceptions (mainstream was more likely for those with few behavioural problems). Cognitive difficulties also appeared to be the key to the placement of those with physical impairments; without such difficulties, placement in mainstream seemed straightforward.

The pupils with less significant cognitive difficulties were placed in special schools, special units and mainstream classrooms. The extent to which such difficulties were accompanied by emotional and behavioural problems exerted a strong influence on whether their time was spent within mainstream classrooms or in more separate provision.

Mainstream provision was the norm for those pupils with sensory impairments, with one exception of a particularly high achieving pupil whose profound deafness was considered to be beyond the limits of a mainstream placement and who found the hearing world of mainstream education stressful. This illustrated a specific reason for an individual to be placed in a special school. In the other cases, where pupils with similar kinds of difficulty were placed in different sectors, frequent explanations were the **multiplicity** of problems which called for provision to be made in special schools, or the preferences of their parents.

The case studies were located in two regions and it was clear that the regional policies had influenced the placements of the children. One region had emphasised the development of special units in mainstream schools; for the other this was still a policy for future action. We discuss special units later in this chapter and comment on how provision in such units, although counted in with special schools in the national statistics, may be distinctively different especially in the opportunities it offers for shallow-end inclusion into mainstream.

The education authority tendency to expect that special schools will continue to be the appropriate setting for some pupils' education rested heavily on the needs of those with profound learning difficulties and multiple difficulties. Also particularly important were the problems that were seen as associated with the inclusion in mainstream of those with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. Decisions about placement would be expected to be influenced by parents and we consider that in a later part of this chapter. Financial concerns, however, are central to all policies for provision, and it is to those matters we now turn.

The relative costs of mainstream and special school provision

Comparisons of the costs of education for children in mainstream with those for special schools were found to be very difficult for education authorities. They were clear that we, as outsiders to the whole financial scene of authority provision, were in no position to make estimates. The complexities of disaggregating the costs of educating pupils with special needs from those associated with the rest of the pupil population are legendary. It is only recently that elected council members have moved towards giving priority to comparative ways of thinking about costs; previously, discussion about funding focused almost exclusively on the children's special needs and that approach was supported by all political parties. The very considerable increases in the costs of SEN provision, fuelled by the rise in the level of recording, now make it difficult to allocate resources purely on the basis of perceived need.

Although we were not able to obtain from authorities in general the hard figures of comparative costs, we were able to ask what they **thought** about the issue. The perceptions of those who have responsibility for the placement of pupils is important. Such perceptions will influence decisions made in response to parents' or schools' stated preferences, in mediating difficult cases and in resisting parents' preferences (ways which may lead to families resorting to legal means of forcing education authorities to make particular kinds of provision).

On the face of it, twice as many education authority officers regarded provision in special schools as more expensive than those perceiving mainstream provision as the more costly. However, complications such as the need for some regions to make more use of residential care than others made this finding less clear-cut than it appeared. A new and major problem associated with education authorities coming to terms with comparative judgements about funding has been the somewhat rapid increase in levels of recording and the associated rise in costs for SEN, especially in mainstream schools. Education authorities saw this as having the potential to get out of hand in the absence of clear government guidelines on recording. The uncertainty was exacerbated by the substantial variation in the costs of educating pupils with Records of Needs in mainstream schools, depending on both the nature of their difficulties and the terms in which the Record was written. Thus for one of the case study pupils, with severe learning difficulties and placed in a mainstream school, the amount of learning support was unspecified and the curriculum for some subjects was unmodified. For other pupils, the amounts of learning support and therapy were clearly specified and, in some cases, delivery was monitored by parents. For those without a Record there was, as we have already reported, even less clarity and this generated fears that in times of

financial stringency there would be distinctions made between them and the recorded pupils that would have grave implications for their access to resources.

Education authorities were endeavouring to calculate the costs of providing for SEN in different sectors, but at the time the figures for provision for SEN in mainstream were simply not available; our research proposal was unrealistic in expecting that they would be (even in the case study authorities in which we scrutinised their approaches to costing in considerable depth). In one authority (see Chapter 5, Table 5.1) we were given access to estimated average costs per pupil in one education authority for a variety of special provision. On the basis of this isolated set of estimates we can make three broad and tentative hypotheses. It appears that:

1. All special provision is (not surprisingly) more expensive than average mainstream costs for pupils in general.
2. Provision in special units or classes in mainstream schools is of the order of twice the average cost for mainstream pupils overall, but is less than that for provision in special schools. **NB** These hypotheses do not take into account the fact that the special schools were catering for those with the most severe difficulties (cognitive or emotional and behavioural), or that the calculations did not include additional elements from special units' share of the general costs of the mainstream schools.
3. The highest costs were incurred by special school provision for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (especially the residential schools outside the regions), those with profound learning difficulties and those with hearing impairment.

Estimates of this kind could look quite different after local government reorganisation. With smaller authorities, there will be more concern about whether provision will be sought outside the authority and what the financial implications of that will be. Some of the outside provision may, indeed, no longer be available as the largest authorities disappear and with them the economies of scale needed to maintain some highly specialised facilities. Within authorities, financial and policy decisions may bring about changes in provision that will fundamentally affect the availability of, and access to, different placements.

Any decisions and policies for effective provision will depend not only on financial considerations, but also on what is (or could) be offered in different educational settings - special or mainstream. We turn first to the account of mainstream provision, including special units, that has emerged from this research.

Provision for SEN in mainstream settings

Education authority officers, as we saw in Chapter 2, regarded the potential of mainstream settings to offer a broad and balanced curriculum entitlement to all pupils as the main strength of such learning environments. Enthusiasm for this was tempered, however, by unease of three kinds. First, although in principle pupils with special needs could be offered similar experiences to those of their peers, in practice there were anxieties that mainstream staff were in many cases not well prepared for tailoring such offerings to individuals' needs. There was little agreement about whether the greatest risks were from over-optimistic or under-optimistic expectations on the part of teachers about what pupils could achieve. Secondly, there were concerns about support for mainstream teachers in the classroom. Learning Support staff were spread very thinly, especially in schools which served disadvantaged areas, and while the work of auxiliaries was valued, it was by no means seen as a substitute for the contribution of a teacher. And thirdly, the spectre of within-the-class segregation and stigma was a feature of a substantial number of accounts from these respondents.

The social and affective advantages of inclusion in mainstream, as seen by education authority officers, focused on opportunities for interaction with a greater range of peers, the possibilities of developing wider circles of friends in the general community, an environment that encouraged the skills needed to develop an independent life and the raising of pupils' expectations of themselves. The downside of inclusion, however, was also evident in their comments. Concerns for the damaging effects resulting from pupils with special needs becoming more aware of their disadvantages, experiencing work on which they had little chance of success and being either bullied or over-protected (the 'mascot' syndrome) were identified.

Despite these concerns, for some officers the priority was for **all** children to be educated in ways that fostered appropriate attitudes to the **whole** population of pupils, and this, it was argued, can be most effectively overtaken in situations where it is assumed that those with special educational needs are included in standard mainstream provision. As a means of achieving this, the idea of special units within mainstream schools, rather than the retention of two distinct sectors of education, was clearly favoured in some areas and by some individuals. In principle, such units can be seen not only as a professional structure that can support the development of individual children in relation to their particular needs and so mitigate the effects of stress and difficulties in the whirl and bustle of mainstream, but also as an encourager of those children to take as much advantage as possible of opportunities to enter into mainstream activities of both a social and academic kind.

The barriers to this kind of development seemed to be based on history, geography, finance, a few parents' preferences and the severity of pupils' problems. Some areas, especially urban centres, had a tradition of separate special schools many of which were recognised, by parents and others, as offering a secure and sound provision for many pupils. In contrast, rural areas with small schools often had a tradition of integration (especially in the primary sector) from which the establishment of special units would be a natural progression. In such circumstances, however, resource problems of accommodation, staffing and equipment could be acute in sparsely populated areas; the provision of special units might have to focus on only a subset of schools. That could entail long journeys for some pupils with special needs, and would deny them integration with peers from their own locality. Even if these problems could be overcome, and with the expectation that most of the pupils would adapt well, there were still concerns that provision of this kind for those with the most severe difficulties, whether of a cognitive or emotional kind, would have deep-rooted limitations.

In both the education authorities where the case study work of this research was carried out, the policy was one of valuing the idea of increasing the numbers of special units in mainstream and reducing the numbers of special schools. This was seen as more cost effective in the longer term, especially as some special schools were regarded as operating below capacity with greater numbers of pupils being placed in mainstream. Despite the similarities in these policies, the two authorities had rather different histories with regard to integration and to education in special schools, and this had influenced the rate at which special units were developing. They both had to face, however, the issue of how to provide the specialist support for pupils with the most severe forms of cognitive and emotional problems, such as autism or profound learning difficulties or acute behavioural tendencies; it was not clear that such difficulties could be adequately provided for in a mainstream context, even where generalised special units are available.

In many ways, special units could be seen potentially to offer a range of benefits, and to enable mainstream education to provide everything that special schools claim to deliver. But the realisation of that potential would depend very much on how each unit was managed. To some extent this would be a matter of resources and the placing of the unit within the school; an annexe beyond the football pitch could exacerbate the stigma of segregation. Absolutely central, however, would be the pervasive ethos of the school and how the staff and pupils thought about a complete school population and the importance of providing for all, rather than the `them and us' of 'unwanted immigrants' from another sector. Careful thought would have to be given to ways of

addressing integration issues with mainstream pupils. They would need support in making adjustments to the changes in their learning environments. In particular, schools would have to be vigilant in detecting any signs of stress in relationships among pupils and be prepared to respond promptly to bullying incidents.

Turning to the case studies of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools, the general findings of the research illustrated the very considerable demands faced by staff in trying to support those with significant learning difficulties. Provision of the individual support required was in some cases just not possible. Although the entitlement of those with special needs to the full **5-14** curriculum programme was accepted by almost all teachers, the culture of achievement which schools were expected to pursue was regarded by many as an environment that could only reinforce feelings of failure among those unlikely to progress beyond (or even reach) the lowest of the targets: level A. Indeed, staff emphasised how they would welcome guidance on what they referred to as pre-level A materials, and advice on how children's progress within this level could be encouraged and recognised. This kind of positive support could provide a constructive counter to the risks of creating, in a few schools, a context where pupils with difficulties have to put up with a sense of failure, a less than adequate curriculum and some possible bullying.

Multiple disabling characteristics, especially where this included disruptive behaviour, made continuous provision in mainstream settings difficult. In a few cases it was clear that pupils were suffering from restricted learning opportunities in mainstream and a lack of a full and appropriate curriculum, and some experienced social isolation. For others, however, the advantages to their social and academic development arising from their inclusion in mainstream appeared to be considerable.

The pupils with sensory impairments appeared to achieve well in mainstream settings, particularly with special unit support. The enabling features of their educational circumstances usually guaranteed them sound educational experiences. Where there were special units, specialist tuition (eg in Braille) and emotional support were sometimes readily available. In other cases of pupils with different kinds of difficulties, however, this had to be fought for by parents.

The role of the learning support teacher (LST) in mainstream classrooms has been of central concern in meeting the needs of pupils with SEN. Over the last decade and a half the trio of roles as consultant, co-operating teacher and individual tutor has characterised the debate about, and practice of, learning support. Co-operative teaching, for example, has varied in practice: on the one hand, the LST may act as an

extra pair of hands who targets those pupils with the greatest difficulties in the class, while the class or subject teacher proceeds with her or his planned lesson concentrating on those pupils with less pressing problems; on the other hand, the LST may collaborate with the mainstream teacher on an equal basis in the planning and implementation of the lesson and provide help for any pupil who needs it. Thinking of this as a continuum of increasing degrees of co-operation, the practice observed in the case studies suggested that LSTs were under pressure to focus their efforts almost exclusively on those children with recorded SEN and helping the few with the most severe problems in the class, rather than becoming involved in the higher level collaborative activities and interacting with all pupils regardless of whether they had significant learning difficulties. In the primary schools particularly there was very explicit targeting of pupils and some withdrawal from the classroom.

There was little evidence that the learning support staff's consultancy role was recognised. They were regarded as experts who would be able to cater for a particular sub-group of pupils, rather than as consultants who would support management and other teachers in developing their own expert practice in meeting the needs of this sub-group. The exceptions to this, however, were some staff development sessions led by specialists in visual impairment. Almost all the mainstream staff involved mentioned the effectiveness of this initiative which involved them wearing spectacles that simulated the impairments and then being required to do what they had asked the pupils to do.

It is important to record considerable confusion about the relationship of the funding for learning support and who receives the support. LSTs were sometimes forced to make a distinction between pupils with and without a Record of Needs; some teachers were appointed to work **only** with recorded pupils. In other cases, schools interpreted the situations in ways that suggested there would be no learning support for non-recorded pupils. As Devolved School Management becomes more embedded, the variation among schools is likely to increase.

There was an important question about how teachers (learning support or mainstream) achieved effective differentiation among pupils in classrooms with a wide range of achievements. This research did not look in depth at materials that were being used; the evidence on this matter related only to how teachers themselves perceived the effectiveness of their differentiating strategies. There was certainly no appearance of complacency. The increasing range of pupil ability within classrooms, lack of support (especially for pupils at or below level A in the 5-14 programme) in the way of ideas and resources, and shortage of time for planning, all contributed to a sense of failure to

attain the goal of effective differentiation. This was especially apparent as teachers tried to meet the needs of pupils with moderate learning difficulties. There was a sense that teachers were delivering a standard curriculum, and pupils with learning difficulties were simply being fitted into it - somehow, anyhow. The dissatisfaction among teachers with this, the antithesis of the individualised curriculum, was all too obvious.

It is not only mainstream schools that have children with increasing ranges of ability within their classes. As we have already indicated, the populations of many special schools have also become more diverse and include children with more significant difficulties than previously. It is to provision in the special sector that we now turn.

Provision for SEN in special schools

The data collected from education authority officers, reported in Chapter 2, made it clear that they saw special schools as institutions where the teacher-pupil ratios were more favourable than those in mainstream, and teachers had more expertise in differentiation and assessment. This enabled special school teachers, with the support of visiting therapists of various kinds, to provide individualised programmes for pupils that both integrated academic work with social development and facilitated any specialist help that was needed. In so far as the education authorities displayed any unease about the special sector, it was in relation to their potential (especially in the case of small schools) to provide pupils with their entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum. Variation within the sector was reflected in comments which, on the one had, accepted that many teachers displayed sufficient flexibility to counter concerns about curriculum opportunities, and, on the other hand, expressed fears that other teachers in special schools may underestimate the potential of at least some pupils.

Almost all of the education authority officers' discussion on a common curriculum entitlement focused on the **5-14 programme**. One aspect of this concerned what was regarded as a lack of provision within the guidelines to deal with the question of how the attainments of pupils whose achievements do not, and may well never, reach level A. This, in association with inevitable limits of the range of teachers' subject expertise (especially in small schools), could seriously constrain the implementation of 5-14. On the other hand, it was argued that for some pupils, particularly those with emotional and behavioural difficulties or with language and communication problems, special schools were better placed than mainstream to provide the concentrated and co-ordinated support that these individuals required to enable them to achieve the potential they had to record attainments substantially higher than level A.

The protective climate and social safety of the special schools was emphasised by education authority officers. Some children were seen as blossoming in such settings in contrast with the isolation and stress that, it was suggested, would be encountered in the wider world of mainstream. There were two sides to this picture, however. On the one side, there was a vision of children with special needs thriving in an environment where they were given work that was achievable and their achievements were recognised. On the other side, there was the possibility that the child might be just as isolated as she or he would be in mainstream, and that the context of the educational provision carried with it both the stigma of segregation and an inadequate preparation for functioning independently as an adult in modern society.

Turning to staff in the special schools on which the case studies focused, they presented a picture of less than perfect morale. A central feature of this related to the 5-14 programme. While the principle of a common curriculum entitlement was supported, the suggestion was that special schools had been isolated from mainstream developments yet felt under pressure to conform. In particular, guidance on working within level A was lacking and seemed, indeed, to reflect a neglect of the very lowest achievers in the fundamental conceptualisation of the curriculum entitlement. For three of the case study pupils, 5-14 was not seen as at all appropriate and an alternative curriculum was being followed. Although this could be thought of as a manifestation of the limitations, in the realities of the world of education, of some `ideal' notion of a common entitlement, there was anxiety among the teachers that they might be regarded as offering inadequate provision by not pursuing 5-14 for **all** pupils.

More generally the special school staff felt undervalued and uncertain about their future. Education authorities did not seem to have communicated to them a sense of their worth. The idea that mainstream schools would benefit from association with those employed in the special sector, and that the latter would also gain advantage, seemed to have made little practical headway. In some cases where such associations were tried, the experiences of both teachers and pupils were negative: mainstream schools seemed unprepared to adjust their routines to accommodate the special school pupils, and special school staff found themselves in the position of trying to avoid inconvenience for the mainstream school. In these circumstances, special school staff would be unlikely to convey positive messages about integration to pupils in their charge.

This is not to say, however, that the research found no examples of successful liaison between the special and mainstream sectors. The Future Needs Unit attended by two of the case study young people, had developed a successful working relationship with a neighbouring comprehensive. Pupils from the Unit participated in mainstream classes

on a regular basis and were assisted by mainstream peer tutors. A range of common ventures, including a ski-ing trip, had taken place. It was perhaps significant, that one of the psychologists emphasised that for inclusion of this kind to work successfully, there had to be advantages for both mainstream and special schools pupils; mainstream pupils, for example, taking National Certificate modules in caring could draw on their experience of working with special needs pupils. Nevertheless, our impression was that there was still some important thinking to be done about the ways in which mainstream schools (teachers and pupils) could come to see the value to themselves of the part-time inclusion of those with special needs in mainstream.

The pupils in the case study special schools appeared to benefit from the availability of expert tuition and specialised facilities (eg speech therapy, medical support, specialist teachers). For a minority of these children, the special school setting also enabled them to take on responsibilities towards others which they would not have contemplated in mainstream settings. For others, however, provision in the special school, especially if it was some distance from home, could impede social integration with the peer group as a whole. Our impression, mostly from the comments of education authority officers, was that in the future the populations of at least some individual special schools might return to greater homogeneity. The justifications for continuing provision in this sector might well be couched in terms of a specialist role in meeting the needs of particular categories of pupils such as those with profound learning difficulties, autism or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. There were fears, however, about bringing together all pupils in the last of these categories. While there was no direct evidence of the problem, professionals were concerned about the possibilities that timid children with significant emotional difficulties (arising, for example, from various forms of abuse) should find themselves in close and continuous contact with others who are belligerent and disruptive.

Parents and provision

The education authority officers' views, reported in Chapter 3, indicated that they saw parents' views on the merits of mainstream and special schools as running along fairly traditional lines. The strengths of special schools would be seen as the general ones of smaller class sizes, specialised expertise of the staff, protective environments and opportunities to concentrate on the personal and social goals of the individual. The parents in the case studies, however, seemed not to think in terms of the qualities of special schools in general, but rather to focus on their child's experience of the individual school(s). Their concerns were with whether their child was happy and coping, and with the particular nature and quality of expertise in the specific context and in relation to their child's individual needs.

In the mainstream sector there was a similar contrast in the ways education authority personnel talked about parental views, and the language parents used. The former suggested that parents valued their children remaining in the wider community, the avoidance of stigma that might be associated with special schools and a wider choice of subjects in an academic environment. Parents, once again, personalised their response and reacted to the effect the particular school had on their child: whether he or she was happy, close to home, seemed to be benefiting socially and was able to receive sufficient and appropriate support. Although the numbers were small, there were some reservations about the academic progress of children in each of the sectors, but it was clear that parents identified both strengths and weaknesses in their personal experience of both kinds of placement.

Almost two thirds of the statements from parents of the case study pupils about their choice of placement, in mainstream or special, saw such choices as restricted by professionals, availability of provision or family circumstances. For nearly a further quarter, options were never considered. Only about one in eight reflected an extensive choice of provision. In contrast, slightly more than half of the education officers regarded parental choice as extensive.

Both education officers and parents identified tensions in the relationships between them. For the education officers, these were seen as primarily concerned with the problems of making parents aware of the options open to them, parents making what were (in the authority's view) unwise choices for their children's placements and personal tensions between particular parents and individual professionals. Apparent, but rather less salient, were conflicts between authorities' strategic or financial plans and parental preferences or demands for placement outwith the region, and the dangers of authorities appearing to patronise parents. For their part, parents of the case study pupils saw the professionals as restricting the choices for their child and not valuing their views. The process of, and follow-up to, the establishment of a Record of Needs were substantial causes for concern; uncertainty and delay over the recording, and the subsequent difficulties in obtaining the resources either specified in or implied by the Record, added to the frustrations experienced by these parents, some of whom felt uninvolved in the recording process. For the minority who had been assertive in determining a particular placement for their child, or demanding additional individual resources, this had proved an additional stress.

The pupil case studies in the research suggested that a small minority of parents had had very little involvement in the placement process. The majority were much more interested, took advantage of information offered and were generally and actively

supportive of what schools were trying to do. They had little specific educational knowledge, however, and even if not entirely satisfied with the provision were prepared to defer to the professionals' views. A small group of parents were distinctive in their assertiveness, the lengths they went to keep themselves informed (educationally and legally) and the influence they had on their children's placements and share of resources.

The assertive parents could have a major impact on decisions (eg inclusion of a Down's syndrome child in mainstream or extra learning support for a mainstream school). Almost all of the efforts were made by mothers and most (though not all) could be described as middle class and well educated. Where they were supported by voluntary organisations, education authority officers were uneasy, at a general level, that children with particular kinds of difficulty from specific types of background could be placed at a considerable advantage over others with regard to resources. A clear message coming from the case studies was that children from underprivileged backgrounds (in care or with parents who themselves had cognitive difficulties or emotional problems), or with global, social, emotional, behavioural or moderate learning difficulties rather than specific learning difficulties, had a bleak outlook unless the professionals were vigilant in fighting their corner.

It was not only the parents' direct interactions with the education system that were important in making the best of the provision. The kind of support provided at home was also crucial. Examples from the case studies showed how parents' attempts to encourage intellectual development, ensure their children were treated as part of the whole community and help them establish independence, had all had a profound impact on progress. Over-protectiveness or lack of parental support had, on the other hand, apparently held back pupils who might otherwise have achieved more. The importance of establishing clear communication between schools and parents was clear, but parents varied considerably in the extent to which they were willing or able to make sense of accounts of their children's activities and progress and to take action accordingly.

The education authorities recognised, of course, the power of parents collectively to influence policy, particularly when they were supported by voluntary organisations. In one of the case study authorities, for example, parents had slowed down the developments that aimed to increase numbers of special units to replace special schools by their choice of the latter for their own children. This illustrated how parental choice could drive provision and that it was likely to lead to a retention of (or even an increase in) diversity of provision. Such diversity was likely to sit uneasily with increasing demands for cost effectiveness. As things stood, we argued that most parents did not

see themselves as being offered significant alternatives, and that many were not actively involved in considering the different options which were left largely to the benign discretion of the professionals. It was interesting, however, that the authorities seemed generally to have acceded to the wishes of those parents who had chosen very actively to try and influence placements. If more were encouraged in this, as it could be argued they should be, even more financial problems could be placed at the doors of education authorities.

Training needs

One of the difficulties of thinking about mainstream teachers' training needs arose because the nature of their responsibility for providing for children with SEN was by no means clear cut. The change in policy following the 1978 HMI Report led education authorities over the next decade to formulate descriptions of general responsibilities for school's senior management and class or subject teachers in meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. This generalised way of looking at things was reflected in this research in the authorities' (and to a large extent school senior managements') very **broad** expressions of concern. Some 15-16 years after the Report (when we collected the data), the mainstream classroom and subject teachers were seen as in need of training in: awareness raising, behaviour management, the implications of meeting individualised needs of pupils integrated into mainstream and confidence building. What seemed to be lacking, however, was an appreciation of how mainstream teachers themselves made sense of the world of their own school or classroom and of their responsibilities to pupils.

In some contrast to the authorities, mainstream teachers saw their responsibilities in precise terms as meeting the needs of **particular** individuals with **specific** problems in the context of provision for the wider group of pupils in their class. The teachers' framework for thinking about their day-to-day responsibility was concerned with how to support, encourage and cope with particular children as part of their class activities, curriculum, progress and assessment. Their priorities were not focused on developing a more general appreciation or understanding of SEN, but rather on learning from others, experienced in the area, about how to deal with the specific problems in their class. Such expertise, they confidently assumed, was available if only they had access to it and the necessary time.

Learning support teachers, not surprisingly, had a wider range of concerns. They were conscious of gaps in their knowledge of a variety of areas of SEN such as autism, language and communication difficulties, new technology in support of specific problems and counselling skills. Their wide area of responsibility across the school

called for a substantial breadth of knowledge. Whereas class teachers saw themselves as essentially reactive to the needs of the children in their class, learning support staff had to be far more pro-active in identifying and assessing the implications of pupils' needs throughout the school. The education authorities tended to assume that diploma courses for LSTs provided what was needed. But by no means all had had the opportunity for such courses, and those who had still regarded themselves as needing more training in specific areas. As Closs and Buultjenns (1995 unpublished) reported, it has been learning support teachers who have most enthusiastically taken advantage of any training opportunities offered by higher education.

For teachers in special schools, there was more agreement with education authority respondents about their training needs. The emphasis tended to be on familiarisation with aspects of the common curriculum entitlements for **all** pupils (5-14, TVEI, SCOTVEC, life skills), but with the addition of a concern for greater understanding of how to meet the needs of those pupils with the most severe difficulties. Closs and Buultjenns (1995) made the important point that teachers seeking training relevant to meeting the needs of pupils who form a small minority (eg with multiple and complex difficulties, language and communication difficulties or the most severe impairments) tend to be too few to make up viable cohorts for modules. Training may therefore collapse or become very expensive' (p36).

In all these cases, teachers and education authorities were calling for closer liaison among mainstream, learning support and special school staff. The need for firmer co-operation and opportunities to learn from each other and to observe others in action in a variety of settings was frequently expressed. This was further emphasised in the report by Closs and Buultjenns (1995) where they argued that the skills needed to establish these relationships (and also those with pupils and parents) were of central importance in training programmes. Yet the evidence from the research was that these kinds of links were by no means a common pattern. Two broad factors seemed to us as instrumental in hindering their establishment.

First, there were sensitivities (and some confusion) about status, responsibility and who was expected to learn from whom. Mainstream teachers were by no means all enthusiastic about accepting teachers from the special sector as expert consultants. For their part, teachers in the special sector were sometimes lacking in confidence about their ability to fulfil a role of this kind. However, they were stung by some of the patronising mainstream staff attitudes which assumed that links with special should consist of mainstream pupils doing things for special school pupils. Within mainstream schools, there were still examples of learning support staff being regarded as remedial

teachers who were there to deal with the very lowest achieving pupils and the most disruptive elements in the class. This problem could even extend to senior management (Closs and Buultjenns, 1995, referred to some Heads' notions of a `remedial cupboard'). In the secondary sector, the status of subject teachers depended heavily on their standing within their discipline. This exacerbated problems for learning support staff who, lacking subject expertise, could readily be assigned to dealing exclusively with those children who had the greatest need. In practice, therefore, the development of the consultancy role with stronger relationships among colleagues, and learning support teachers fulfilling an educative function, was by no means always apparent.

The second factor related to some lack of clarity about **what** was to be learned. Mainstream staff were seen as in most need of training, but this was not construed in a precise way. In general, there are two levels of their needs to be considered. First, they are expected to offer what might be called standard provision to relatively large groups of pupils with a variety of abilities. They are directed to take account of individual differences and use formative assessment to assign differentiated work so that each task matches the particular pupil's readiness for it. There is substantial documentation (eg Bennett et al, 1984; Simpson, 1989) which shows that, despite exhortations from governments and researchers, systematic and detailed differentiation of this kind does not (and probably cannot) occur in real classrooms of 20 to 30 pupils. This is beginning to make us take a second look at the prescriptions provided. These prescriptions have largely been powered by cognitive and developmental psychology which has focused on the **individual**. Our theories of learning in education have failed to accept that the concern must be for learning in **groups** if there is anything to be gained by mainstream teachers. The second level of their need concerns the very specific difficulties which a minority of pupils have within the larger class group. Within this minority the teacher may regularly encounter several with difficulties in reading or number work, or with behavioural problems; others, however, may be much more `one-off' in nature and encounters with them (eg the child with a profound sensory impairment, autistic tendencies, extreme fragility, Down's syndrome, cerebral palsy) will be more rare. What mainstream teachers need, therefore, is not a broad training to cover all these eventualities at any time, but a focused support experience at the time that the particular problem is evident in their classroom.

Special school staff might well be in a position to provide such focused and immediate support, especially it they were based in special units **within** mainstream schools. Their own training capabilities and needs, however, would depend on the breadth of difficulties covered by the special school or unit in which they worked.

Learning support staff, it could be argued, have the broadest range of knowledge needs. Not only are they likely to be in contact with pupils over the whole range of SEN in their work throughout the school, but they also have the widest responsibility for supporting mainstream teachers. That implies the development of an understanding of: how to offer consultancy, broadly or specifically focused, in ways that other teachers will be motivated to receive it; how to develop collaborative practices in planning, preparation of materials and classroom management, and how to cope with the uninformed traditional views that others may hold of appropriate roles for the LST. As Closs and Buultjenns (1995) report, it is the LSTs who are most likely to take advantage of the training opportunities. An examination of these authors' account of the training available suggests that the patterns of opportunity most closely match the needs of LSTs rather than those of other teachers.

Turning to what is offered in the way of training, it is clear that the field is in a period of transition and some disarray. Substantial, extended, often full-time courses are being replaced by modules (which may or may not lead to awards) with rather different characteristics. For example, 'twilight' training implies reduced placement in, or visits to, different schools (such visits were prized by respondents in the research) and presents difficulties for those who work in less accessible areas of the country. At a general level, however, there seem to have been three particularly important and inter-related political factors: the pressures of the quasi-market in education, the impact of local government re-organisation and the changes in the funding base for higher education sources of training.

The move towards a market-oriented approach to education has had a significant effect on education authorities and training institutions, and will in the future have a corresponding impact on schools as they take responsibilities for their budgets. Market forces are seen by higher education, as reported by Closs and Buultjenns (1995), to account for: the loss of courses in specialist areas which attract only small numbers of teachers; the rise of more economical (though often regarded as less effective) forms of training like twilight classes and modules; difficulties for medium and long-term planning and for the retention of highly trained people; a reactive, rather than pro-active and so developmental, outlook on training; the departure of any kind of national strategy for SEN training; substantial problems in monitoring what is being provided across Scotland; and an awareness of the danger that the collapse of training of this kind in England may be repeated north of the border. It could be argued, of course, that the market approach should extend training opportunities to more people and enable the providers of training to respond quickly and in a focused way to the needs of schools. In response to that, however, has been the argument that many school

managers, especially in the mainstream but also in the special sector, are insufficiently aware of what is needed to provide adequately for those children with SEN. The absence of a national strategy for training supported by resources has been seen as likely to encourage a backlash against integration and differentiation within schools and give rise to the reintroduction of streaming and setting. A particular strand of concern, characterising the views of many respondents throughout the research, has been that for pupils with SEN but without a Record of Needs. These pupils do not have individually assigned resources and anxiety has been widely expressed about schools readiness to pay for training designed to help meet their needs.

There is a source of support from the SOED for SEN training within Regions, of course, which provides 70 per cent of the funding on the condition that education authorities contribute 30 per cent. In some of the larger authorities this has worked quite well with modules, regular courses and planned activity time being enabled to cover a wide range of general issues, including co-operation among learning support staff, class teachers and school management. This has even facilitated work in `minority areas' like severe/profound learning difficulties and sensory impairment without such serious concern about cost-effectiveness. There has been considerable unease, however, about whether some of the much smaller unitary authorities, which follow from local government reorganisation in 1996, will be able to raise the 30 per cent of funding from their meagre resources. Even in authorities where the loss of economies of scale is less drastic, the future of advisory services, which play a major part in the organisation of training, have been seen as uncertain.

Within higher education, according to Closs and Buultjenns (1995) there was an awareness that the initial training of mainstream teachers did not provide an adequate grounding in SEN. However, the competence-based courses were already heavily loaded, given the time available. In considering provision through in-service, the competition for SHEFC funding within and between institutions resulted in most provision having to cover its costs directly from revenue and that skewed it away from the specialist minority areas to which reference has already been made. There was special concern for issues like behavioural management which was needed, especially by inexperienced teachers, but which was less likely to be available in the future as the SEN training infrastructure was eroded.

While we would not wish to diminish in any way the importance of the mass of practical and resource problems that face those involved in training teachers in the area of special educational needs, we do draw attention to two features which stand out in our research findings. The first relates to the central need for practice to **develop**.

Ideas and their implementation have to move forward if Scottish education is to come anywhere near providing the full entitlement to which young people with SEN have a basic right. Unfortunately, neither the reorganisation of local government, nor the reactive stance of the quasi-market approach are conducive to developmental work of this kind. Secondly, although the rhetoric is full of commitment to meeting the individual needs of pupils, cost-effectiveness priorities lead training plans to over-ride that commitment, especially in relation to those with rare and difficult problems. In particular, the ways of construing training have looked at it in too broad a way. As a result, it has not offered the specific, immediate support that would motivate the mainstream class teacher to take advantage of what is on offer nor has it impinged to a significant extent on the top items of school senior managements' lists of priorities. The last of these is the most important: with at least some of the training budget devolved, Headteachers will be responsible both for stimulating trainers to make available what is needed, and for encouraging staff to take advantage of what is on offer. But they will also have to think in new ways about the kind of service that within-school and between-school consultancy might offer on essentially an individual basis to meet the very specific needs of mainstream teachers. While lip-service has been paid to the expertise already in schools, it lies among special school/unit teachers and learning support staff and there have been by no means widespread efforts to ensure that full use is made of them. It is they who are likely to benefit most from externally provided modules tailored to their needs, but that implies the development of practices within the schools to enable them to pass on their knowledge to class or subject teachers as and when needed. Such developments will have to be seen by all concerned as both rewarding and non-threatening.

The future of provision for SEN

One of the tasks undertaken by the research was to look at trends for the future and we have systematically collected data from statistical sources and the views of various stake holders to illuminate this area. We can say, for example, that given current circumstances we would expect that moves towards integration into mainstream schools for children with SEN will continue, and that a major part of the increased mainstream provision will be through the establishment of special units attached to mainstream schools. This suggests that separate special schools will diminish in number but only slowly since they have substantial support from parents and others, and mainstream provision (in at least some areas) is not yet adequate for the full SEN role. Special units in mainstream schools may be of a general kind catering for a wide range of difficulties among 'local' children. However, there are arguments which point to the importance of having expertise tailored to the needs of particular pupils such as those with profound learning difficulties, disorders such as autism or behavioural rather than

learning problems. Such specialised units have considerable advantages, but they inevitably will require that some young people will be educated at a distance from their homes. It may be the case that until more specialised units are created, special schools will become more specialised, against the trends of recent years.

We anticipate that rates of recording for pupils with SEN will continue to increase, especially under pressure from parents' increased understanding of the relationship of Records of Needs and resource provision. Whether there will be a substantial increase in the recording of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties seems to us less certain. We are clear that very specific attention will have to be given to such children, since mainstream settings (even where there are special units) currently find it difficult to cater for many in this category. If increased rates of exclusion are to be avoided, there will be a need for mainstream schools to develop ways to meet the needs of such children, perhaps through a greater use of behavioural units.

A major priority for the future will be a re-think on the organisation of training. This stretches from a perceived urgency to establish some kind of national strategy (the SCoSDE guidelines are now regarded as more or less obsolete), to a focus at school level on the establishment of within-school or between-school consultancy services to meet, in particular, the needs of mainstream teachers. The rhetoric of communication among special unit staff, learning support teachers and mainstream staff, and ideas for links between special and mainstream schools for partial integration of pupils between schools and for outreach or consultative activities have not, for the most part, been successfully implemented. Between the national and the school levels, the training scene is characterised by uncertainty and fragmentation. We have described how the quasi-market in education has led to an unpredictable picture, but one that offers two causes for disquiet. First, the infrastructure of provision by both higher education and education authorities is being undermined. Secondly, the top priority given to cost-effectiveness of training is disadvantaging those members of society who have the less common problems in learning or behaviour.

At a more general level, we acknowledge that this picture of the future could be undermined by the fragmentation of education authorities in local government reorganisation. The new patterns of provision would require substantial developments, experimentation and evaluation. This kind of programme would be expensive and beyond the budgets of many of the new unitary authorities. In principle, co-operative initiatives among several authorities could support such developments; in practice, it seems likely that for the first few years at least authorities will be wishing to establish themselves as autonomous agencies and stamp their individuality on their provision.

One of the main arguments for the decentralisation that will be brought about by the creation of smaller authorities is that it ought to make services more responsive to **local** needs. It is also the case, however, that disadvantaged groups and individuals are dependent on a **wider** support that enables them to articulate their requirements and negotiate with authorities over policies and provision. In circumstances of rapid and major change there are always risks that the needs of those who are not in the mainstream of events will be marginalised. Smaller authorities with lower staffing will have to assign responsibility at a sufficiently senior level to ensure that the concerns of those with special educational needs are given attention in ways that enable their voices to be heard and developments pursued. If that does not happen, the brakes may be taken off discriminatory practices and optimisms like curriculum entitlement, equity and justice will be tacitly suppressed. That loss would not be simply one for those with special needs; society has much to gain from the contribution that these members of its population have to offer. It will be important for the Scottish Office to monitor this whole process of transition and the impact it has on children and young people with SEN; not only have current levels of provision to be sustained, the concept of a continually **developing** system has to be central. We would argue that none of this can be left to chance.

It could be claimed that this argument is essentially paternalistic, and that what is needed here is simply a relaxation of the professional grip on provision so that individuals have the opportunity to exercise their preferences to get what they want to meet their needs. Indeed, a central theme of government policy over the past fifteen years has been the importance of individual parents choosing from available provision on behalf of their children. Underlying this approach is the belief that competition among providers represents the best means of improving quality and achieving greater value for money. This research indicates some of the problems which may arise when such an approach is applied to the field of special educational needs. First, it is evident that some parents are likely to be extremely active on their children's behalf, thus ensuring the delivery of additional resources, whereas others, for a range of reasons, are likely to be much less involved. This may lead to a situation where resources are distributed, to some extent, on the basis of parental pressure rather than need. Secondly, there are likely to be tensions between the intention of government to control public expenditure and the desire of parents for a wide range of placement options from which to choose. The dedication of more resources to children with recorded special educational needs may imply fewer resources for those whose needs are not recorded. Thirdly, it is anticipated that the new small unitary authorities will be able to offer less choice that the previously larger regions. Finally, tensions are likely to arise between

the political commitments of authorities to mainstream placement wherever possible and the wide-ranging preferences of individual families.

Kirp (1982), reviewing the recommendations of the Warnock Committee, argued that it failed to challenge the near-absolute pre-eminence of professionalism as a policy frame (p147). In 1995, it would appear that additional elements have entered the frame, including a commitment to market regulation through parental choice, a greater emphasis on rights and a growing political commitment to integration. This widening of the policy frame is likely to produce a more dynamic system and one which may offer some pupils a better education than they might otherwise have received. On the other hand, it may also result in greater diversity of provision, along with greater disputes between education authorities and parents.

There is no golden solution to the problems of provision for children with SEN. Both mainstream and special schools are experiencing considerable demands in meeting the needs of a changing population, and there is no consensus that one setting is more effective or efficient than the other. At a personal level, children can experience just as much isolation in special schools as in mainstream, and stigma is not easily removed by simply changing from a special institution to mainstream. There is no doubt that mainstream and special schools each have their distinctive strengths, but also some weaknesses. Special units in mainstream could be argued to offer the best of both worlds and to provide a way to improve mainstream schools' understanding of pupils' social needs and minimise negative experiences. In practice, however, there are some dangers that such units could offer an even more segregated experience than special schools. In the 'achievement culture' of education there are, of course, questions about the setting in which pupils with SEN are likely to maximise their achievement. Even if there were ethical grounds (which there are not) for carrying out controlled experiments in special and mainstream schools, the very wide variety of achievements that are seen as valuable for young people with learning difficulties would make rigorous comparison impossible. This implies that understanding of the value of different forms of institutional provision will have to depend on an incremental development of knowledge through essentially case study data (of individuals and institutions) of a qualitative kind.

10
IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

We have identified a number of implications of our research findings for the Scottish Office Education Department, education authorities and schools. These relate to the areas of policy, guidance and information and monitoring and are particularly important in the context of local government reform. They imply a shared responsibility for strategic aspects of SEN provision among central and local government and schools.

For the Scottish Office Education Department

1. Policy

Consideration should be given to:

- Making clear (i) a coherent national policy which indicates the general principles guiding government thinking about the advantages for pupils with varying needs of different kinds of provision in mainstream classrooms, special units and special schools, (ii) guidance on directions of change in provision deemed appropriate for the future.

- The development of a national strategy for SEN training of teachers and other staff in mainstream and special schools which takes account of new smaller authorities' reduced finances. This would include class and subject teachers, learning support staff, those who teach in special units/schools, special needs assistants and ancillary staff.

- Specific funding to support training in provision for those children whose problems are relatively rare. In a conventional market sense, this kind of training is not regarded as cost-effective.

- Establishing a policy which safeguards the development of new ideas for identifying and meeting the needs of pupils with SEN in the context of local government reorganisation.

- Dealing with special educational needs in curriculum and other innovations in ways which make them an integral part of the developments, rather than an issue to be published after the main event.

2. Guidance

Taking particular account of the expected constraints on services and development that are likely for the next few years as a result of local government reorganisation, consideration should be given to:

- Guidance to education authorities and schools about the establishment of special units of various kinds as part of mainstream schools, and the management of change in institutional provision.

- Realistic guidance for parents about the extent and nature of choice of schools that they can expect in the context of re-organised local authorities.

- Advice to parents on how they can contribute to the intellectual and social development of their children.

- Guidance about provision in different settings for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and advice on school policies for exclusion.

- Guidance on provision for pupils with SEN but without a Record of Needs.

- Clarifying thinking about criteria for opening Records of Needs and about the range of SEN for which such Records are appropriate, especially in the case of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Guidance to education authorities and schools on the training of staff at all levels to meet the needs of children with SEN.

- Guidance to special schools on what is meant by a full curriculum entitlement, especially for those with the most severe SEN.

- Discussion of how computer systems may be used to maintain statistics of various kinds on pupil populations, nature of difficulties, special support for, admissions and exclusions, as required for monitoring purposes.

- Guidance to education authorities on the government's thinking about the balance to be achieved in taking account, on the one hand, of parents' preferences for provision for their children and, on the other hand the major national thrust of cost-effectiveness in the education of those with SEN.

3. Information and Monitoring

Consideration should be given to:

- Distinguishing in published statistics between provision in special schools and provision in special units attached to mainstream schools.
- Monitoring the effects of Devolved School Management on the inclusion of, and provision for, pupils with SEN of various kinds in mainstream schools.

- Monitoring the levels of exclusions from, and non-admissions to, schools and the nature of the problems of those excluded or not admitted.

- Monitoring the effects on the adequacy of the range of provision for staff training in SEN of the internal and external quasi-market approaches now operating in Higher Education and local authorities.

- Monitoring the extent to which highly specialised facilities, currently available through economies of scale in the largest authorities and accessed by smaller authorities, will continue to be available after the reorganisation of local government.

For Education Authorities

1. Policy

In the demanding circumstances of local government reorganisation, urgent consideration should be given to:

- The formulation of explicit policies on the futures of special schools and special units as part of mainstream schools. These would include strategies for the management of any changes proposed and detailed plans for implementation. Such plans would have to address questions of (i) the extent to which such units should cater for particular sub-groups within the population of children with SEN, including those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (ii) what provision would be made for those with the most severe difficulties, and (iii) how expert tuition and specialised facilities and equipment would be distributed among schools.

- Ensuring that after local government reorganisation, an appropriate repertoire of provision to meet the needs of pupils with SEN is both maintained and developed further. This requires particular attention to future versions of advisory services.

- The establishment of systems for collaboration among the various public services (health, education, social work, the police, children's panels) that may be concerned with identifying and meeting the special educational needs of children and young people.

- The provision of opportunities for schools to undertake training for all staff. This should include (i) the identification of training needs for different groups and (ii) the encouragement of individual consultancies within or between schools to provide the targeted support for individual class or subject teachers.

- The level of provision of learning support staff in schools in relation to the proportions of children with SEN in school populations, with or without Records of Needs.

- Clarification of how funding for learning support teachers should be reflected in the balance of their duties, in terms of their role with general groups, assistance for all pupils with SEN or simply those with a Record of Needs.

2. Guidance

Consideration should be given to:

- The availability of adequate guidance for parents about the real choices that are open to them in provision for their child, and procedures for ensuring that they have an opportunity to voice their views without feeling they are forced into decisions. This should include information about the implications of local government reorganisation for provision for SEN.

- Guidance to schools on provision for pupils with various kinds of SEN, especially those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties or with relatively rare problems. In particular, support for special schools on the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum and on decisions about transfer of their pupils to mainstream.

- Guidance to schools on training opportunities for staff at a general level, and also in the provision of specific support for mainstream teachers which may take the form of consultancy within or between schools.

- Guidance to schools on the conditions and procedures for the exclusion of pupils.

- Guidance to councillors in newly formed authorities on the importance of provision for pupils with SEN, and the advantages and disadvantages of the various policy options.

- Guidance to parents on the procedures for, and implications of, their child being given a Record of Needs. This should include the implications of **not** having a Record.

3. Information and Monitoring

Consideration should be given to:

- The establishment of more precise costing of provision for children with SEN in mainstream schools, whether in special units or not.

- Monitoring the provision in schools for children with SEN but without a Record of Needs.

- Monitoring exclusions and non-admissions of pupils and the extent and nature of the problems of those excluded or not admitted.

- Monitoring the availability of training (nationally, locally or within schools) for teachers and other staff across the range of SEN.

For Schools

1. Policy

In the context of uncertainty about education authority support as local government is reorganised, consideration should be given to:

- The education of all pupils and all staff about SEN and disability more generally and about the removal of discrimination and stigma in both actions and attitudes.

- Policy for collaboration among senior management, all mainstream teachers and departments, learning support staff and staff in special units (or special schools) on provision for children with SEN.

- Ease of movement between special units (or special schools) and mainstream classes to encourage the integration of pupils with SEN and collaboration among teachers.

- Specific provision for consultancy from special school/unit teachers or learning support staff for individual class or subject teachers. If necessary, this may involve collaboration with other schools.

- Specific time allocations for collaborative planning (among mainstream, learning support and special teachers) about differentiated classroom provision.

- Commitment to enabling staff to take opportunities for out-of-school training on SEN.

- Developing a clear policy for reacting to, and providing for, pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

- Where there are special units within schools, policies for the distribution of resources, placement of the unit within the wider school and range of shared facilities and activities.

- For special schools, a clarification of what is meant by a full curriculum entitlement for those with SEN and the conditions under which pupils should be recommended for transfer to mainstream.

2. Guidance

Consideration should be given to:

- Guidance for parents on how the school meets special needs of various kinds.

- Guidance for teachers on collaboration among mainstream, learning support and special unit staff.

- Guidance for teachers and auxiliaries on how children with SEN may experience worthwhile and useful activities in various educational settings that enable them to progress in a variety of ways reflecting a broad and balanced curriculum.

- Guidance for ancillary staff (janitors, cleaners, secretaries, school meal providers) on appropriate ways of meeting the needs of children with SEN.

- Guidance for teachers on the detection of, and ways of dealing with, and stress in relationships between pupils with SEN and others, and instances of bullying.

- Guidance for mainstream pupils on establishing positive relationships with pupils with SEN.

3. Information and Monitoring

Consideration should be given to:

- Clarification of training needs of all staff including auxiliaries and ancillary staff.

- Monitoring provision of all pupils with SEN including those without a Record of Needs, in terms of breadth and balance of the curriculum and other more individual features.

- Monitoring exclusions and non-admissions and keeping a clear record of justifications for these actions.

- Establishment of appropriate computerised databases to store information required for the various school, education authority and national monitoring requirements.

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Appendix A: Interview Schedules

1: Directorate Officials

Preamble

- Will ask about the current situation, but will also ask you to reflect on how things have changed over the past 5-10 years and to speculate on what might happen in the next 5-10 years
- Interested mainly in your own personal responses to our questions, but will ask about the Region's stance on certain issues
- Confidentiality

1a • *According to the recent statistical bulletin from SOED, (xx%) of children with a Record of Needs in your Region are placed in mainstream schools (but not in special units).*
Does that strike you as an accurate figure?

- Do you think this figure has increased, decreased or remained the same over the past 5-10 years?
- How would you describe the kinds of difficulties experienced by the children who are currently in special schools?
- Thinking ahead to the next 5-10 years, do you envisage that the numbers of pupils with special educational needs being placed in mainstream schools will increase, decrease or remain the same?
- Again, looking forward, do you think the numbers of pupils with complex special educational needs being placed in mainstream schools will increase, decrease or remain the same

b • *The Region's policy states that pupils with special educational needs should be educated wherever possible in mainstream schools (Grampian, Highland, Dumfries and Galloway, Lothian, Tayside, Shetland, Western Isles)* ***OR*** *should be placed in the least restrictive educational environment (Strathclyde, Central, Orkney)* ***OR*** *should receive education appropriate to their needs (Fife, Borders, Tayside)*

- Would you say this is an accurate picture of the Region's practice?
- Has this picture changed over the past 5-10 years?
- Do you think the picture will change over the next 5-10 years?

2 • Do you know how decisions are made about the allocation of funding to different kinds of provision in the Region (eg special schools, units, mainstream placements and non-educational provision)?

- Do you know what elements are taken into consideration when calculating the allocation of resources to schools for pupils with special educational needs (eg staffing, equipment)?
- Do you know how the funding for different kinds of provision in the Region is calculated?
- Does the Region collect information on the costs of special education provision? If so, in what form is this information? Who gets the information? How is the information used?
- Does the Region monitor how the resources allocated to the school for pupils with special educational needs are spent?
- Do individual schools monitor how the resources for pupils with special educational needs are spent?
- How do you think the costs of special school provision compare with the costs of mainstream school provision as they are operating at present?
- Do you think the introduction of DSM will have any significant effects upon special education provision? (all except Strathclyde and Dumfries and Galloway) **OR** Do you think the introduction of DSM has had any significant effects upon special education provision? (Strathclyde and Dumfries and Galloway)

  In our paper we mention four main ways in which local education authorities in England and Wales have taken account of pupils with special educational needs. in calculating the budgets that are devolved to schools. One is to include funding for special needs within the general formula. Another is to make additional funding available to the school for SEN pupils. A third approach is to calculate the cost of a place, for instance for a visually impaired child and a fourth option is to retain central control of the special educational needs budget, rather than devolve it to schools.
- What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of each approach?
- Have attempts been made to consider questions of costs alongside questions of effectiveness?

3 • What would you say are the differences in the provision for special educational needs which is offered by special schools, units and mainstream schools?

  (Probe for aims and expectations - academic and social development; locational, social and functional integration)

  (Probe for differences in culture)
- Have there been any representations, for example from parents or other groups, in favour of either special or mainstream school provision?

4 • Are attempts made to measure the progress made by pupils with special educational needs in special and mainstream schools?

- If so, what can you tell me about the progress of pupils in special and mainstream schools?
  (Probe for aims and objectives)
  (Probe for outcomes, evidence and criteria)
- Does information about pupil progress influence decisions about whether to continue with or change the placement of a child?
- How would you say the goals for children with special educational needs compare with the goals for children more generally?
  (probe for academic and social goals)
- Are children with special educational needs included in the 5-14 programme of curriculum and assessment?
  If so, have attempts been made to design attainment targets below level A?
  Are particular strategies being used to assist children in reaching the existing attainment targets?

5 • How would you describe the role of special schools in the Region?

- Has their role changed over the past 5-10 years?
- How do you think special schools are coping with present numbers of pupils with special educational needs?
- Are there any links between special and mainstream schools in the Region?
- Do you think the role of special schools will change over the next 5-10 years?
- If the numbers of pupils in special schools decrease over the next 5-10 years, how do you think special schools will adapt?
  The report by the Audit Commission and HMI on special education provision in England and Wales states that local authorities have responded to reductions in the numbers of pupils in special schools by reducing staffing levels, redeploying special school staff in mainstream schools or amalgamating special schools.
- If the numbers of pupils in special schools decrease over the next 5-10 years, is the Region likely to consider any of these responses or any others?

6 • Thinking now about mainstream schools, how would you describe their role in providing for pupils with special educational needs?

- Has their role changed over the past 5-10 years?
- How do you think mainstream schools are coping with present numbers of pupils with special educational needs?

- Do you think their role will change over the next 5-10 years?
- If there is an increase in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools, do you think the schools will be able to cope?
  (Probe for expertise, resources, commitment)
- If pupils with more complex special educational needs are placed in mainstream schools do you think the schools will be able to cope?
  (Probe for expertise, resources, commitment)

7 • Are there any rules about how the Region decides whether or not to open a Record of Needs for a child?
  The recently published SCCC document on special educational needs urges teachers to accept Warnock's notion of a continuum of pupil needs, rather than categorising them according to their difficulties.
- Can you tell me a little about how you think about pupils with special educational needs?
- Can you tell me anything about how teachers think about pupils with special educational needs?

8 • Thinking ahead to the next five or ten years, are there any factors that you think will lead to an increase in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs being placed in mainstream schools?
- Are there any factors which you think will lead to an decrease in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs being placed in mainstream schools?
  (Probe for personal and Region's commitment to integration)
- Do you think there will be any changes over the next 5-10 years in the Region's stance on integration?
- Do you think parents are likely to influence either an increase or a decrease in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs being placed in mainstream schools?
- Do you think the voluntary organisations are likely to influence the figures in either direction?

2: Principal Educational Psychologists

Preamble

- Will ask about the current situation, but will also ask you to reflect on how things have changed over the past 5-10 years and to speculate on what might happen in the next 5-10 years
- Interested mainly in your own personal responses to our questions, but will ask about the Region's stance on certain issues
- Confidentiality

1a • *According to the recent statistical bulletin from SOED, (xx%) of children with a Record of Needs in your Region are placed in mainstream schools (but not in special units).*
Does that strike you as an accurate figure?

- Do you think this figure has increased, decreased or remained the same over the past 5-10 years?
- How would you describe the kinds of difficulties experienced by the children who are currently in special schools?
- Thinking ahead to the next 5-10 years, do you envisage that the numbers of pupils with special educational needs being placed in mainstream schools will increase, decrease or remain the same?
- Again, looking forward, do you think the numbers of pupils with complex special educational needs being placed in mainstream schools will increase, decrease or remain the same

b • *The Region's policy states that pupils with special educational needs should be educated wherever possible in mainstream schools (Grampian, Highland, Dumfries and Galloway, Lothian, Tayside, Shetland, Western Isles)* ***OR*** *should be placed in the least restrictive educational environment (Strathclyde, Central, Orkney)* ***OR*** *should receive education appropriate to their needs (Fife, Borders, Tayside)*

- Would you say this is an accurate picture of the Region's practice?
- Has this picture changed over the past 5-10 years?
- Do you think the picture will change over the next 5-10 years?

2 • What would you say are the differences in the provision for special educational needs which is offered by special schools, units and mainstream schools?
(Probe for aims and expectations - academic and social development; locational, social and functional integration)

(Probe for differences in culture)

- Have there been any representations, for example from parents or other groups, in favour of either special or mainstream school provision?

3
- Are attempts made to measure the progress made by pupils with special educational needs in special and mainstream schools?
- If so, what can you tell me about the progress of pupils in special and mainstream schools?
  (Probe for aims and objectives)
  (Probe for outcomes, evidence and criteria)
- Does information about pupil progress influence decisions about whether to continue with or change the placement of a child?
- How would you say the goals for children with special educational needs compare with the goals for children more generally?
  (probe for academic and social goals)
- Are children with special educational needs included in the 5-14 programme of curriculum and assessment?
  If so, have attempts been made to design attainment targets below level A?
  Are particular strategies being used to assist children in reaching the existing attainment targets?

4
- How would you describe the role of special schools in the Region?
- Has their role changed over the past 5-10 years?
- How do you think special schools are coping with present numbers of pupils with special educational needs?
- Are there any links between special and mainstream schools in the Region?
- Do you think the role of special schools will change over the next 5-10 years?
- If the numbers of pupils in special schools decrease over the next 5-10 years, how do you think special schools will adapt?
  The report by the Audit Commission and HMI on special education provision in England and Wales states that local authorities have responded to reductions in the numbers of pupils in special schools by reducing staffing levels, redeploying special school staff in mainstream schools or amalgamating special schools.
- If the numbers of pupils in special schools decrease over the next 5-10 years, is the Region likely to consider any of these responses or any others?

5
- Thinking now about mainstream schools, how would you describe their role in providing for pupils with special educational needs?

- Has their role changed over the past 5-10 years?
- How do you think mainstream schools are coping with present numbers of pupils with special educational needs?
- Do you think their role will change over the next 5-10 years?
- If there is an increase in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools, do you think the schools will be able to cope?
  (Probe for expertise, resources, commitment)
- If pupils with more complex special educational needs are placed in mainstream schools do you think the schools will be able to cope?
  (Probe for expertise, resources, commitment)

6
- Are there any rules about how the Region decides whether or not to open a Record of Needs for a child?
- Have the criteria for recording changed over the past 5-10 years?
- Has the number of Records of Needs opened over the past 5-10 years increased, decreased or remained the same?
  (Probe for implications for the costs of SEN provision)
- Do you think the criteria for recording will change over the next 5-10 years?
- Do you think the numbers of Records of Needs opened over the next 5-10 years will increase, decrease or remain the same?
- Probe for influence of parents on numbers of Records of Needs
- How is it decided whether a child with a Record of Needs is placed in a special or a mainstream school?
- Do the Reviews of Record of Needs include information on pupil progress?
  The recently published SCCC document on special educational needs urges teachers to accept Warnock's notion of a continuum of pupil needs, rather than categorising them according to their difficulties.
- Can you tell me a little about how you think about pupils with special educational needs?
- Can you tell me anything about how teachers think about pupils with special educational needs?

7
- Do you know how decisions are made about the allocation of funding to different kinds of provision in the Region (eg special schools, units, mainstream placements and non-educational provision)?
- Does the Region collect information on the costs of special education provision? If so, in what form is this information? Who gets the information? How is the information used?

- How do you think the costs of special school provision compare with the costs of mainstream school provision?
- Do you think the introduction of DSM will have any significant effects upon special education provision? (all except Strathclyde and Dumfries and Galloway) **OR** Do you think the introduction of DSM has had any significant effects upon special education provision? (Strathclyde and Dumfries and Galloway)
- Have attempts been made to consider questions of costs alongside questions of effectiveness?

8
- Thinking ahead to the next five or ten years, are there any factors that you think will lead to an increase in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs being placed in mainstream schools?
- Are there any factors which you think will lead to an decrease in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs being placed in mainstream schools? (Probe for personal and Region's commitment to integration)
- Do you think there will be any changes over the next 5-10 years in the Region's stance on integration?
- Do you think parents are likely to influence either an increase or a decrease in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs being placed in mainstream schools?
- Do you think the voluntary organisations are likely to influence the figures in either direction?

3: Advisers

Preamble

- Will ask about the current situation, but will also ask you to reflect on how things have changed over the past 5-10 years and to speculate on what might happen in the next 5-10 years
- Interested mainly in your own personal responses to our questions, but will ask about the Region's stance on certain issues
- Confidentiality

1a • *According to the recent statistical bulletin from SOED, (xx%) of children with a Record of Needs in your Region are placed in mainstream schools (but not in special units).*
Does that strike you as an accurate figure?

- Do you think this figure has increased, decreased or remained the same over the past 5-10 years?
- How would you describe the kinds of difficulties experienced by the children who are currently in special schools?
- Thinking ahead to the next 5-10 years, do you envisage that the numbers of pupils with special educational needs being placed in mainstream schools will increase, decrease or remain the same?
- Again, looking forward, do you think the numbers of pupils with complex special educational needs being placed in mainstream schools will increase, decrease or remain the same

b • *The Region's policy states that pupils with special educational needs should be educated wherever possible in mainstream schools (Grampian, Highland, Dumfries and Galloway, Lothian, Tayside, Shetland, Western Isles)* ***OR*** *should be placed in the least restrictive educational environment (Strathclyde, Central, Orkney)* ***OR*** *should receive education appropriate to their needs (Fife, Borders, Tayside)*

- Would you say this is an accurate picture of the Region's practice?
- Has this picture changed over the past 5-10 years?
- Do you think the picture will change over the next 5-10 years?

2 • What would you say are the differences in the provision for special educational needs which is offered by special schools, units and mainstream schools?
(Probe for aims and expectations - academic and social development; locational, social and functional integration)

(Probe for differences in culture)

- Have there been any representations, for example from parents or other groups, in favour of either special or mainstream school provision?

3
- Are attempts made to measure the progress made by pupils with special educational needs in special and mainstream schools?
- If so, what can you tell me about the progress of pupils in special and mainstream schools?
  (Probe for aims and objectives)
  (Probe for outcomes, evidence and criteria)
- Does information about pupil progress influence decisions about whether to continue with or change the placement of a child?
- How would you say the goals for children with special educational needs compare with the goals for children more generally?
  (probe for academic and social goals)
- Are children with special educational needs included in the 5-14 programme of curriculum and assessment?
  If so, have attempts been made to design attainment targets below level A?
  Are particular strategies being used to assist children in reaching the existing attainment targets?

4
- How would you describe the role of special schools in the Region?
- Has their role changed over the past 5-10 years?
- How do you think special schools are coping with present numbers of pupils with special educational needs?
- Are there any links between special and mainstream schools in the Region?
- Do you think the role of special schools will change over the next 5-10 years?
- If the numbers of pupils in special schools decrease over the next 5-10 years, how do you think special schools will adapt?
  The report by the Audit Commission and HMI on special education provision in England and Wales states that local authorities have responded to reductions in the numbers of pupils in special schools by reducing staffing levels, redeploying special school staff in mainstream schools or amalgamating special schools.
- If the numbers of pupils in special schools decrease over the next 5-10 years, is the Region likely to consider any of these responses or any others?

5
- Thinking now about mainstream schools, how would you describe their role in providing for pupils with special educational needs?

- Has their role changed over the past 5-10 years?
- How do you think mainstream schools are coping with present numbers of pupils with special educational needs?
- Do you think their role will change over the next 5-10 years?
- If there is an increase in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools, do you think the schools will be able to cope? (Probe for expertise, resources, commitment)
- If pupils with more complex special educational needs are placed in mainstream schools do you think the schools will be able to cope? (Probe for expertise, resources, commitment)

6 • Are there any rules about how the Region decides whether or not to open a Record of Needs for a child?
The recently published SCCC document on special educational needs urges teachers to accept Warnock's notion of a continuum of pupil needs, rather than categorising them according to their difficulties.
- Can you tell me a little about how you think about pupils with special educational needs?
- Can you tell me anything about how teachers think about pupils with special educational needs?

7 • Do you think the introduction of DSM will have any significant effects upon special education provision? (all except Strathclyde and Dumfries and Galloway) **OR** Do you think the introduction of DSM has had any significant effects upon special education provision? (Strathclyde and Dumfries and Galloway)
- Have attempts been made to consider questions of costs alongside questions of effectiveness?

8 • Thinking ahead to the next five or ten years, are there any factors that you think will lead to an increase in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs being placed in mainstream schools?
- Are there any factors which you think will lead to an decrease in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs being placed in mainstream schools? (Probe for personal and Region's commitment to integration)
- Do you think there will be any changes over the next 5-10 years in the Region's stance on integration?

- Do you think parents are likely to influence either an increase or a decrease in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs being placed in mainstream schools?
- Do you think the voluntary organisations are likely to influence the figures in either direction?

4: Parents

Preamble

Interested in your own views and experiences

Confidentiality

Tape recorder

Identification and placement

Can you tell me how and when [child's] difficulties first came to light?

probe for nature of difficulties

What happened then?

probe for assessment, contact with professionals, involvement of parent in RoN procedures

What aspects of schooling do the difficulties affect?

How was it decided that [child] should go to this school? (probe for alternatives)

Are you happy that [child] is in this particular school?

What happened before[child] came to this school?

How much contact do you have with the school?

probe for nature of contact, with whom and its value

The school

What would you say you wanted [child] to gain from school?

probe for most salient goals (academic/ social)

then probe for goals not emphasised

How well do you think the school helps [child] to achieve the things that are most important (academic/social goals)?

probe for enabling or constraining factors (eg resources, expertise)

Thinking about the other things you've mentioned (less salient academic/social goals), how well do you think the school helps [child] to achieve these?

probe for enabling or constraining factors (eg resources, expertise)

What other kinds of support does [child] get in school?

probe for individuals and resources

How does [child] get on with his/her teachers/auxiliary?

Is there any support which is needed but not given?

Overall, how would you say [child] is getting on at school?

What does [child] say to you about how he/she is getting on?

Have you been able to find out how the school thinks [child] is getting on?

Has the information the school given, for example in reports been helpful to you?

Can you tell me a bit about the work he/she does in school?

probe for 5-14 programme/standard grade and testing

How does the work [child does] compare with work done by children of his/her own age (eg levels)

What kinds of work does [child] find easiest to do?

What kinds of work does [child] find most difficult?

Is there anything that [child] is doing that you think is a waste of time?

Is there anything that you think [child] should be doing but is not?

Is there anything that could be done to improve how [child] does at school?

Can you tell me what your hopes for [child] in the years ahead are?

Appendix B: Description of Education Authorities

In this report, each education authority was assigned an identifying letter. These are listed below, together with a brief description of the regional characteristics. Where large is used in the description it refers to a population size over 500,000; medium authorities have 250,000 - 500,000 people; and small authorities fewer than 250,000.

Authority	Description
A	Small population, rural environment
B	Medium population, mixed rural and urban, several small towns
C	Small population, rural environment
D	Medium population, mixed rural/urban, no large towns
E	Large population, predominantly rural, one major town
F	Small population, rural environment
G	Large population, predominantly urban, central belt
H	Large population, predominantly urban with substantial rural areas
I	Medium population, predominantly rural, some large towns
J	Small islands authority
K	Small islands authority
L	Small islands authority
M	Small population, predominantly rural, no large towns
N	Medium population, predominantly rural, some small towns
O	Medium population, predominantly urban
P	Large population, predominantly urban
Q	Medium population, mixed urban/rural, some small towns
R	Medium population, predominantly rural, some large towns

The authorities will, of course, look very different after 1 April 1996.

Appendix C: Raw Statistical Data

1: Numbers of Recorded Pupils in Mainstream Schools: Regional and Divisional comparisons in 1991 (Figure 3, p68)

Region	1991 recorded mainstream
A	159
B	237
C	217
D	96
E	332
F	373
G	141
H	1971
I	202
J	6
K	14
L	23
M	117
N	619
O	75
P	409
Q	333
R	418

2: Proportion of Total School Population with Either a Record of Needs in Mainstream or in Special School Placement (Figure 4, p69)

Region	1991 recorded mainstream
A	159
B	237
C	217
D	96
E	332
F	373
G	141
H	1971
I	202
J	6
K	14
L	23
M	117
N	619
O	75
P	409
Q	333
R	418

3: Proportion of Recorded Pupils Placed in Mainstream Schools in 1988 and 1992 (Figure 5, p70)

Region	1988 recorded mainstream	1992 mainstream
A	41	159
B	111	237
C	102	217
D	28	96
E	105	332
F	137	373
G	31	141
H	471	1971
I	36	202
J	3	6
K	15	14
L	6	23
M	20	117
N	119	619
O	28	75
P	74	409
Q	109	333
R	141	418

4: Proportion of Total School Population in EA Special Schools (Figure 6, p73)

Year	School Population	Total Population
1972	10084	983921
1973	10137	1015678
1974	10095	1029922
1975	12369	1031436
1976	13021	1027513
1977	12890	1013722
1978	12405	991907
1979	11727	967130
1980	11262	937598
1981	10767	907987
1982	10338	877384
1983	9901	848278
1984	9614	823223
1985		
1986		
1987	9009	767099
1988	8939	753464
1989	8405	744080
1990	8350	742658
1991	8255	745512
1992	8482	750645

5: Proportion of Primary and Secondary Agend Pupils in EA Special Schools (Figure 7, p74)

Year	School Population	School Population	Total Population
1972	5187	4897	983921
1973	5093	5044	1015678
1974	4615	5480	1029922
1975	5799	6570	1031436
1976	6061	6960	1027513
1977	5952	6938	1013722
1978	5728	6677	991907
1979	5310	6417	967130
1980	5017	6245	937598
1981	4683	6084	907987
1982	4450	5888	877384
1983	4214	5687	848278
1984	4141	5473	823223
1985			
1986			
1987	3972	5037	767099
1988	4003	4936	753464
1989	3927	4478	744080
1990	3915	4435	742658
1991	4043	4212	745512
1992	4189	4293	750645

6: Proportions of School Population Placed in EA Special Schools in 1988 and 1992 (Figure 8, p75)

Year	1988 Spec	1992 spec
A	151	149
B	377	405
C	167	119
D	772	590
E	963	954
F	382	347
G	1481	1333
H	4130	4036
I	467	437
J	12	22
K	9	18
L	28	20
M	90	61
N	491	472
O	443	380
P	1782	1834
Q	846	836
R	478	453

7: Proportions of School Population with a Record of Needs in 1988 and 1992 (Figure 9, p80)

Year	1988 Record	1988 total population	1992 record	1992 total population
A	185	14468	284	14984
B	480	41538	639	40946
C	230	21917	313	22154
D	446	53054	506	53202
E	850	74981	974	76025
F	501	33756	690	34212
G	614	95201	623	93689
H	3852	351391	5262	346489
I	403	54827	505	55365
J	12	3120	23	3261
K	23	3990	14	3948
L	32	5221	38	4897
M	93	10050	168	9518
N	531	59128	1005	58408
O	352	53099	361	52414
P	1539	91712	1998	90598
Q	791	82300	877	80224
R	566	55102	853	55327

Region	Elements of SEN provision not devolved	How special schools are included in scheme	What weightings will be incorporated in mainstream budgets
Borders	Learning support service, RPS, Health Board provision (eg speech therapy	No special schools	Small schools allowance built into formula. Beyond that there seems to be no other special weighting
Central	Learning support service, RPS, Health Board provision (eg speech therapy)	In scheme and part of a cluster for admin purposes	No details of formulae given
Dumfries & Galloway	All SEN & nursery provision, RPS, audit unit	Single special school will be part of scheme, but is not mentioned in document	No details of formulae given
Fife	Learning support service, RPS, support for integration of pupils with SEN, Health Board provision, behaviour support provision, peripatetic service and facilities, support for speech, language and communication	Special schools and departments of special education will be part of scheme by 1997	Formulae will incorporate a weighting for small schools and split site schools
Grampian	LSS salaries, SEBD and SEN peripatetic staff salaries, advisory service*, RPS* (* subject to review)	In scheme, but may take full term (to 1997) to implement. An annual lump sum is proposed as special school weighting	Lump sum for small primary, secondary and special schools, split site schools and remote schools; in areas of social deprivation a formula will be calculated, based on free school meals and other factors
Highland	Learning support service, RPS, support for individual pupils with SEN (budgets for staff in designated classes/units will be devolved, but ring-fenced)	Special schools brought into scheme at same time as mainstream schools	Funding of staff in designated classes/units is additional to schools', basic budget entitlement and is ring-fenced

Region	Elements of SEN provision not devolved	How special schools are included in scheme	What weightings will be incorporated in mainstream budgets
Lothian	Integration (within equal opportunities strategies and including staffing), RPS, Health Board provision	In scheme, but will take full term (to 1997) to implement. Special schools are not included before then.	Positive discrimination added to basic pupil (roll) formula (will be a single sum - not under separate budget heads as in Strathclyde)
Strathclyde	SEN provision, RPS, EDS, Quality Assurance	Some schools in pilot from 1992. Special units count as special schools.	Positive discrimination in APT areas added to basic pupil (roll) formula (covers staffing and other budget heads)
Tayside	Educational support services, RPS, Health Board provision, EDS	In scheme, but no details given	No details of formulae
Orkney	Support for SEN, RPS	Single special school in scheme by 1997. Teaching staff budget based on pupil nos and needs	No weighting. Basic learning support is included in staffing formulae.
Shetland	Learning support services, RPS, Health Board provision	No special schools in region; children sent to mainland schools will continue to be paid for centrally.	No weighting; staffing budgets for designated classes/units are devolved, but ring fenced
Western Isles	Special education, RPS, peripatetic staff, advisory service	No special schools in region; children sent to mainland schools will continue to be paid for centrally.	No weighting

Susan

Description of child and family
Susan is an eleven year old with **cerebral palsy in the form of 'spastic quadriplegia' and perceptual difficulties.** Her fine motor difficulties make handwriting a problem, but otherwise she is an able pupil. She is an attractive and cheerful girl who appeared to revel in the attention she was receiving during the visit. Her parents had made it clear that she was the focus of my attention and she appeared to use this information to get at one of the other girls in the SEN base. She commented that one of the nicest things about being in a wheelchair was that people (like me) came to see her. She has an electrically operated wheelchair which she loves and her teachers said that she had been 'furious' when another child was given a similar one. Susan was described as 'charming', but staff thought she used this to get her own way or to get out of doing something. They regarded her as a little spoilt.

Susan's mother said that the wheelchair was giving her more independence, which was becoming increasingly important as she got older. She had been able to go to a school disco, where she danced with her friends. She was also able to do things for herself, such as get herself a drink from the fridge and help with the housework. However, Susan's mother also indicated that an operation on her spine, had severely restricted her mobility, making it difficult, for example, to dress herself. She also said Susan was aware of the handicapping effects of her disability and occasionally was upset. Susan, according to her mother, had far exceeded the views of the professionals, who thought she would never write nor be able to concentrate. Susan's mother was pleased with the provision in the school, but thought the weakest part of her school experiences were social. This was a problem because she didn't know anyone in her own village and her mother he hoped this would change once Susan went to secondary school.

It was largely due to Susan's mother that the school had physiotherapy support. She fought a four year battle to get this, which included numerous letters to MPs, the Secretary of State and the Home and Health Department. She said it was ultimately the threat of going to the press that had brought a team of assessors from the Scottish Office to the school that obtained a physiotherapist. She planned to do the same about an occupational therapist (as the school did not have the services of one) but felt she needed time to prepare herself for the fight, as it was emotionally draining.

School Career
She is in P7 at a mainstream primary school, where she has been since the age of 5. The school has an SEN base, where Susan spent varying amounts of time each day. This summer she will transfer to the academy, which is attached to the school. Beyond that, she wanted to go to university and the class teacher suggested that this stemmed more from her parents' ambitions than from hers. Susan's mother said she hoped that Susan would eventually marry and have children.

Academic experiences
In the SEN base, she worked on maths or joined in group activities. During the visit, they included story telling, an activity involving street directions but she did not go swimming. Staff in the SEN base thought she was not as independent as she might be and attributed this to Susan's tendency to sit back and have things done for her. Approximately 60% of Susan's time was spent in a mainstream P7 class. The mainstream teacher wanted her to be with the class for more activities, but as a probationer teacher, felt unsure about whether this would be possible. During the visit, she worked on a language activity with two mainstream pupils. They had to rehearse the reading of a menu which they had selected from a book about the Romans, then read aloud to the class. When the class were working on a piece of

writing, Susan had a lap top computer, as her handwriting slowed her down. She was said to be working at around level B/C within the 5-14 English language programme, with listening and talking her main strengths. The mainstream teacher said she had strong views and was becoming confident in her ability to express them in the classroom. Creative writing was said to be an area of difficulty as she was not good at imagining herself in a situation. She found maths, especially problem solving, difficult, but overall was said to be making good progress in school.

Social experiences
Susan appeared to get on well with the children in the SEN base and her mainstream peers. Her mainstream teacher said she tried to discourage the pupils from making a fuss whenever she came into the class, but said there were some who liked to mother her and the class generally were pleased to see her. During the visit, the 'mother' figures were in evidence, offering, for example to get her a tissue etc. Susan asked pupils to get her anything which was out of reach, usually in a fairly 'bossy' fashion. The pupils she was with in language were not chosen for any particular reason, the teacher said. When the three pupils were working on the language activity (the Romans) each took turns at reading. Susan was not always able to read their writing and said so, getting an apology for them for this.

Routines
Susan had been operated on several times throughout her life and was seen regularly by an orthopaedic consultant. She received weekly physiotherapy within school. This was put in place after her mother fought a battle with the authority to get them to appoint a physiotherapist (see above). She had been assessed by an occupational therapist, but had not received any therapy. Her mother was getting ready for her second fight.

Significant people
She appeared not to be particularly close to anyone in the school, but got on well with everyone.

Malcolm

Description of child and family
Malcolm is 15 years old and has two sisters and a brother. He has **spina bifida and learning difficulties**. Shortly after his birth, he was fitted with a shunt to drain fluid from his brain. Sometimes this operation is completely successful in preventing brain damage; Malcolm has a slightly enlarged head and is paralysed from the waist down. He is able to converse very fluently, but has some learning difficulties. Recently, Malcolm has had to have a number of operations. One of these was to stretch the tendons in his leg and on another occasion his shunt became blocked and he was rushed into hospital for emergency surgery.

He spent his day in a wheelchair, which he was adept at manoeuvring and enjoyed demonstrating his ability to perform 'wheelies'. He also got considerable assistance form his pals who push him round the schools, stopping quickly when a teacher is sighted since this was not allowed.

He is able to reflect on his own condition and in his view his lack of physical ability is made up for by his knowledge of the world. Talking about his disability, he says that sometimes he's got stick from other people about it, he says tapping his head, 'I've got it up here, not down there.'

School career
Malcolm has spent all of his school life at the same special school and has generally liked the school although recently he had become over-familiar with the routine and found it boring. It was evident during my visit that he was happy for any excuse to miss lessons. At several points, when the teacher was late or not much was happening, he muttered under his breath 'Boring, boring'. He had just finished work experience at a mainstream secondary school, working as librarian's assistant. He met a girl attending the school who had spina bifida like him, but her difficulties were much worse than his own. In Malcolm's view, it was 'a sin' that she'd gone to that school because of its lack of facilities compared with his own school.

Academic experiences
Malcolm was taking Scotvec modules in: home economics, art, technical, music, computers, English and ceramics. On the first day of the visit, Malcolm chatted about what he was doing at school and other aspects of his life. He said he should be doing home economics at this point, but that no one would mind if he missed it. The following day, lessons in the morning (computers and music) were cancelled because of the Christian Aid jumble sale. Malcolm was meant to be assisting at this, but disappeared into the base. There was a general lack of urgency or interest in the official school curriculum either on Malcolm's part or on that of the teachers.

At the school, there was a strong focus on creating 'real life' situations to enable pupils to practice the skills they will need for independent living. During the visit, Malcolm's class were busy with the supermarket. The shelves were set up in the base and younger children brought money and orders from their parents. The aim was to help younger ones cope with shopping and older ones deal with money and change. It was noticeable that the two girls were much more concerned with helping the younger children. The boys tended to hang around on the perimeter. There were not really enough tasks to keep them all busy and no one was there to encourage then to anticipate extra jobs. Malcolm did not appear to enjoy the supermarket telling me, 'I can't stand awkward wains'. Malcolm got the job of counting the cash. He had some difficulty in filling out the form and one of the girls helped him.

The only time on which Malcolm was fully engaged in a class was in Ceramics. The teacher began by reminding them of what they had been working on last week, focusing on trees as a theme. They had taken photographs and made pots and tiles.

Malcolm found his tile at the beginning of the lesson and tried to work out from the photograph how to model a criss-cross pattern to represent twigs. An art student on placement finally helped him to see how he could reproduce the pattern.

Social experiences
Malcolm said he got on well with other students in the group. It was noticeable that the boys dominated the social space e.g. snooker table. The girls sat around the side and talked quietly to each other. Malcolm had much more interaction with the boys and it was often of a fairly physical nature. He made it clear, however, that he was interested in girls, and said there was a girl at the skating who kept on coming up to chat to him. He thought she fancied him. On his school records there was a letter which had been sent home to his parents about an incident when he had made obscene comments to a sixth former from the local comprehensive school who had come in to help and had been very shocked.

Significant people
A very important part of Malcolm's life at the school took place in the medical room, where he helped other pupils, but also sought help about his own problems. The nurse had encouraged him to take responsibility for looking after his own physical needs such as catheterising himself. The nurse was a large, homely woman who obviously had an important role in the school. There were photos of her surrounded by children and pictures with 'We love you'.

Malcolm chatted to a tiny six year old boy being fed through a tube in stomach, then he bathed the neck of a child who'd been scratched. He did this very gently with encouraging words. The nurse said Malcolm was a good helper although sometimes he was a bit careless.

The nurse said they had to do quite a lot of work with him in the medical area, getting him to take responsibility for catheterising himself etc. At one point they said to him: 'Now look Malcolm, you're a young man now and you've got to do these things for yourself and not be dependent on others'.

Malcolm weighed himself and said that he'd been getting a bit fatter lately and was worried about it. He planned to try to cut down on fatty foods and to exercise his upper body more.

Brian

Description of child and family
Brian is a twelve year old boy with **Down's syndrome** and difficulties in all areas of the curriculum. He is often unresponsive to adults and pupils. 'I don't know' was his frequently heard response to questions during the visit, as was 'scrambled egg' as his answer. There were a few individuals, however, to whom he was very friendly. He appeared to be given to bouts of stubbornness and would sometimes refuse to answer or do his work, but equally he could be open and exuberant. His behaviour, in his Record of Needs was described as 'limits testing'. He needs to be supervised at all times.

Brian lives with articulate middle class parents and has one younger brother. In the interview, his mother described her appalling treatment by medics who informed her that her baby was a Mongol. She said she still found those kinds of attitudes prevailed, but was quite prepared to ignore them.

School Career
He has attended a mainstream primary school since he was five and is now in a P6/7 composite class. His parents were insistent that he go to his local mainstream school for at least the first few years, in order that he would be known within his village. They felt he was deriving social benefits which outweighed anything special schools could offer and he stayed on. She thought the trained auxiliary was wonderful and commented on how when she came back from being ill, two children came to put Brian's shoes on. The auxiliary asked what she was doing and one said 'It's our turn to put Brian's shoes on'. Her response was that Brian puts his own shoes on, and this attitude pleased her. She thought Brian got on well with his peers, but realised that it wasn't a real situation because they were caring for him and looking after him. The school staff expressed the view that it had become harder to meet his needs as he got older. He was due to transfer to a mainstream secondary school in the summer, where the newly built 'special school within a school' will open. She looked forward to this, but was worried about the absence of male role models during his school career.

Academic experiences (including stage in relation to age peers)
He spent his mornings in an ante room, between two classrooms, with two other recorded children A resource teacher and an auxiliary worked with the three pupils in the first quarter of the morning, hearing news, then Stuart (the other boy shadowed) went off to join a group of mainstream pupils with difficulties in maths, taught by the resource teacher. During this time Brian worked with the auxiliary on writing (which included using a lit screen to trace letters) and some maths. This involved some counting to 9 and linking numbers of objects to the number. He managed some of these correctly, but often got the same tasks incorrect after only a short time. Wellington square was used for language work and Brian read and completed word tasks (with oo and ee words eg has the cook a spoon?) competently, although he said he was finding it difficult. His reading book contained words such as march, drum, statue, share etc. On the second day of this, however, he opted out and did no language work. Just before lunch, he worked on computer programmes, which he loved and often asked when he would get on the computer. When observed on the computer, however, he did not do very much and struck any key. Swimming was another of his favourite. Afternoons were spent in the mainstream classroom, joining in the work of his peers. Activities observed included drama, communication tasks (his group were making musical instruments), and a lesson about smoking. He was said to be working at level A in language, progressing to B in some areas (eg talking) and at level A in maths.

Social experiences
His social encounters with mainstream children were, to an extent, dictated by his timetable, with, most of the contact in the afternoon, although he saw them at the

beginning of each morning. The arrival of the three recorded pupils in the mainstream class in the afternoon was fairly conspicuous, partly because the third boy, Tom, had very complex difficulties, including visual impairment and so had to be announced. Brian and Stuart also had another routine which singled them out: they were required to brush their teeth at the end of lunchtime. This was mainly for Stuart's benefit, as his oral hygiene was not considered good and one afternoon, the teacher shouted 'Brian, are your teeth brushed?' The auxiliary nodded and so the lesson commenced. Brian himself made a fuss about where he was to sit and the class teacher simply waited until he had decided. Brian and Tom were taken once a week to the infant assembly. He was seated on a chair at the end of a row of pupils sitting cross-legged on the floor.

During intervals, Brian and Tom stayed in the class with the auxiliary and a few mainstream pupils came to play with him. They played games such as skittles, which was Tom's favourite game. Although Brian participated, this seemed to be regarded as Tom's time and when Brian knocked all the skittles down, he was silently discouraged. At other times he listened to a tape, something he was very fond of doing and ignored all encouragement from the auxiliary for him to go out to play football.

He tended either to shun people who spoke to him, or to lavish affection on a few individuals in the school who came to play with him. One such person was Denise, who was in another class (although she had been in previous classes with him) and who spent intervals with him and some activities (eg drama). He immediately embraced her on her arrival and sat either holding hands or with his hand on her knee. She allowed this but did not appear comfortable. Another child who had a lot of contact with him was Lorna. She tended to seek his attention and the class teacher thought that this reflected some problems of her own, as she was not integrated in the class. Brian did not reciprocate in the way he did with Denise. Most of the children in his class encouraged him to speak, not always with success, but there was a group who kept out of his way. The class teacher suggested they were 'terrified of him'. One of the afternoon activities was a discussion about their most exciting time and when Brian said his was a trip to Harry Ramsden's (fish and chip shop) they did not flinch. They then had to give feedback on whose story was most interesting. No-one specified his, but he voted for Denise's. The teacher asked 'Is that because you like her?' and he said 'Yes' and hugged her.

He had two very contrasting relationships with his auxiliaries (one in the morning and the other in the afternoon). One auxiliary (who had been trained as a nursery nurse) was a 'no nonsense' sort of person who was very warm towards him, but cajoled him constantly. There was little tactile contact between them. The other auxiliary tended not to urge him to do things and he had a much more tactile relationship with her. They were observed in lessons which took place in the mainstream classroom and either the two sat holding hands during a lesson or the rested his hand on her leg. This auxiliary had no formal training. He seemed to work out who was open to this kind of contact and who wasn't and even tested me out on my first day, by trying to hold my hand.

Routines
Brian had no speech or other therapy.

Significant people
He had been very close to the resource teacher who had since moved on to become headteacher of a primary school. She, the class teacher and the auxiliary (the trained one) referred to themselves as the 'A team'. He was taken to visit her in her new school, as he still could not understand where she had gone. This teacher had talked to the mainstream pupils a great deal about their relationships with him and was, by all

accounts, superb. He was clearly very fond of his family, who lavished attention on him and of Denise, a mainstream pupil.

Other things observed during visit

The resource teacher had been appointed in relation to the three recorded children, but she was not a qualified SEN teacher. She had extended her remit to provide maths tuition to a class of mainstream children with difficulties in this area, of which Stuart was a part.

Catherine

Description of child and family
Catherine is a twelve year old girl with **Down's Syndrome and an associated heart condition.** If she has a cold she is kept off school and is often pushed in a pram when the class goes to the academy. She is a friendly and sociable girl, who seems to take great pride in her appearance. During the visit, there were occasions when she answered "ice cream" to every question she was asked and it was said she sometimes threw tantrums. She could also, however, be very caring, sensitive and humorous.

An only child, Catherine appeared to be very close to her mother. Tensions within the marriage had, Catherine's mother thought, arisen partly as a result of Catherine's condition; she felt her husband was distancing himself more and more from Catherine and her and thought a separation was likely in the next year or so. She felt the need to devote herself to Catherine, whose life span could be very short because of her heart condition. The headteacher and the class teacher seemed to view Catherine's mother as overprotective towards Catherine.

School Career
She has attended a special school since she was 5. Some of the children in her class were due to transfer to the nearby mainstream secondary school in the summer. Catherine's mother had this option, but did not feel there was the level of support she required there. At the same time she was dissatisfied with the provision Catherine was getting in the special school, viewing it as not sufficiently challenging. She was willing to reconsider Catherine's placement at a later date

Academic experiences (including stage in relation to age peers)
Catherine was considered a competent reader and a neat writer. She was less successful with maths, finding it difficult to comprehend concepts (eg more/less than x) and retaining those she had learnt. No comparisons were made between Catherine's progress and those of her age peers.

The class were observed doing number and language work, which Catherine worked away at, without any apparent difficulty. The teacher did a great deal of oral work during the visit, in which the class sat together and discussed issues. This seemed to be aimed at encouraging the children to participate and not speak out of turn etc. She was also seen in home economics and PE. Home economics was taught by the class teacher (who also took other classes for this, as it was her specialism) and they made sausage rolls. Catherine seemed to get chastised by the teacher a great deal for not doing as she was told: the class teacher said she thought she was just being lazy or not listening. For PE, the class walked to the academy (in hazardous icy conditions) and during the lesson I interviewed the class teacher.

The class teacher felt that she did not have the knowledge and expertise to teach Catherine and others appropriately. Since most of the 'older' children had moved to the academy, she felt very isolated and felt unable to provide a secondary curriculum for these pupils. The school, she felt, did not support her in her aim to make more appropriate provision for the children.

Social experiences
Catherine appeared to get on well with the others in the class, but there was no apparent 'best friend'. Her mother thought she did not 'cross the line' into friendship with anyone, even the friends in the street whom she had invited in to play with Catherine.

After the PE lesson in the academy the children went to the canteen to buy drinks etc. The interval was over, so there was no contact with the mainstream pupils. The teacher took them to the SEN base, where they often went to drink, eat etc. I got the

impression that the class teacher felt like an intruder, only going in if it she thought it would not be imposing on the unit staff. For the home economics lesson, the class was joined by some pupils from the SEN base in the academy who had previously been at the special school (plus a teacher).

Routines
Apart from the school routines, she was seen regularly by a cardiac specialist. There seem to be some confusion about whether it was her mum or the class teacher who had asked for speech therapy, but so far, this had not been provided.

Significant people
Catherine appeared not to be close to anyone (staff or pupils) in the school. Her mum and her cat are probably the two most important 'people' in her life.

Other things observed during visit
Catherine has a hole in her heart and valves which are in the wrong place. The hospital had offered to operate, although this was likely to be only partially successful and carried some risks. Catherine's mother decided that her quality of life was so good that she would be unwilling to do anything to jeopardise this, so refused the operation.

Tony

Description of child and family
Tony is a 15 year old with **Down's syndrome**. He is keen on sport and is usually dressed in a track suit and trainers. Tony was very well mannered and a little shy. His speech was quite indistinct and he often strung words together rather than speaking in grammatically correct sentences. However, his desire to communicate was very evident.

The family live in a house on a council estate which they have purchased. Tony is the middle child and his mother had three pre-school children to care for at the same time. Tony had to be independent because of the demands of the other children. Tony's father is a TV engineer.

School career
Tony had home tuition and speech therapy at the pre-school stage and then went to a day nursery. At age 4 he started at a special school for children with moderate learning difficulties. A Record of Needs was opened when he was seven and at this stage it was recommended that he move to a school for children with severe learning difficulties because it was felt that he would not be able to cope with the more formal curriculum which would be offered during the later primary stages. His mother was unhappy about this move. Psychological assessments form this period indicate that the educational psychologists believed there was a problem in the way his mother was treating her son. It was stated that she was 'struggling to come to terms with the cognitive limitations of Tony's handicap and her need to change her approach to him....Until [his mother] adjusts to the limitations of Tony's cognitive ability she may well be disappointed with his progress'. At age 14 after his first Future Needs Assessment Tony transferred to his present school.

Academic experiences
At this school there was a deliberate policy **not** to compare pupils with their age peers. It was felt that this was likely to reinforce a deficit model. The emphasis was entirely on measuring pupils' progress in relation to individual goals. Tony was participating in the following curricular areas: reading (functional), mathematics (functional), skills for adolescence, PE, outings, computers, HE (at a mainstream secondary school), cooking, laundry and homemaking. Goals were expressed in terms of **outcomes** (e.g. increase number of words recognised and used in the community) and processes (e.g. ensure maintenance of Tony's self-esteem in the group). He had been attending a mainstream secondary school for two afternoons a week to take Home Economics and was assisted by a peer tutor.

During the period of observation, Tony worked particularly hard in mathematics. The session was run on room management principles with one person organising the room and the other person directing the activities of Tony and a boy with emotional and behavioural difficulties but a high level of achievement.

The aim of the session was to get pupils to recognise prices and hand over the right coin for a particular item (working out exactly how much change was due was not regarded as important; having a sense of approximately how much money was required was seen as very important. In relation to particular items, Tony was asked 'What price is it? Give me £1.' If he got it right three times, he was allowed to move on to a different card. It was explained that success and a sense of achievement and progression were deliberately built into the task. Tony then worked on a sheet with pictures of groceries and prices and used his calculator to do simple additions. He showed me all the sheets in his folder and ran through a calculation again to show me how it was done.

In a central folder, tasks were broken down using a task analysis format. A student's performance in a particular area was noted and a grade awarded depending on the extent to which prompts have been used.

Social experiences
An important goal of the integrated home economics lesson was to increase his confidence and independence. He was expected to make his own way into the class from the car park at the start of the session and back to the taxi at the end. In the view of the senior teacher, Tony's performance and achievement both 'went up a notch'.

In the lessons observed, it was evident that considerable time was taken up dealing with other pupil's challenging behaviour. During one session, a boy was told to leave because he had been rude to the teacher. He refused. Eventually the class moved into another room leaving the boy by himself. While this was going on, Tony sat quietly, arms folded.

Sex education is considered important for Tony's age group. They use two publications: *Not a Child Any More* and an SFEU publication *Health and Sex Education for Students with Learning Difficulties*. For boys, it can be difficult for them to develop a sense of masculinity because they will have been looked after a great deal by their mothers and have had mainly female teachers.

June

Description of child and family
June is a plump nineteen year old with short permed hair and rosy cheeks. She has **Down's syndrome** and learning difficulties and her speech is rather indistinct. She tends to talk in a telegraphic manner including only key words. The speech therapist has diagnosed this as a problem with grammatical structures. She chats to staff and pupils when she feels like it and her behaviour is quite mature. However, she has a firm mind of her own and is capable of refusing to comply with requests. She moves around in a slow, calm manner -one of her teachers describes her as 'a proper lady'.

June lives with her mother in a former council house. Her mother said she would like June to live independently but did not think this would be possible. June attends a number of clubs for people with learning difficulties and has a boyfriend at each. The school has suggested that she should use respite care, but her mother says she has never been separated from June and doesn't intend to be now. She is a widow and her son died of a brain tumour when June was a year old. She receives support from members of her family who live close by.

School career.
June first attended a school for children with moderate learning difficulties and at age nine was moved to a school for children with severe learning difficulties. She became a pupil at her present school (A Future Needs unit) following her Future Needs Assessment at fourteen. Her former school subsequently closed.

Academic experiences
June is was taking the following subjects: Skills for Adolescence, Cooking, Laundry, Homemaking, Personal Presentation, Careers, Computers, Integrated classes at a mainstream secondary in Craft and Design and Home Economics and Link course for one day a week at an FE college. Her educational programme was individualised and her progress was not norm-referenced. Her work experience was recorded on a video and a copy given to her mother.

During the visit, June was observed in the following classes: Art, Skills for Adolescence, Homemaking, Home Economics and Fitness at a local leisure centre.

Social experiences
She joined in all the activities and got on reasonably well with her fellow students, although she did not converse with them a great deal. She obviously enjoyed helping to cook the shared meal (and eating it). At the leisure centre, she was able to change independently and find her way round the different machines, although PE was clearly not her favourite activity. The staff asked June in a non-directive way to think about her behaviour, for instance, whether it was a good idea to have coke and chips as a mid-afternoon snack after a fitness session.

June had recently completed a six week block of supported work experience at a DIY store which she had very much enjoyed. Her support worker had noticed that she became much more confident in expressing herself during this period.

Sarah

Description of child and family
Sarah is a thirteen year old with **moderate learning difficulties**, as stated in her Record of Needs (although the school described her as having severe learning difficulties). She is a small, bubbly, blond haired child, with attractive elfin features, who appears much less mature than her peers in physique and behaviour. She smiles a lot and appears very happy at school. Reading and comprehension are very limited and she needs to be helped through sets of instructions; maths is a particular problem for her.

Sarah's father is a van driver and her mother works part time in a supermarket. She has a younger brother and her mother, like Sarah, smiles a lot. The school thought the parents, especially Sarah's mother, were 'not very bright'. I spoke to Sarah's father on the phone who said his wife was the person I ought to speak to and said 'I know what you're getting at, that Sarah's a bit slow'. Sarah's mother was very pleased with how she was getting on at school and with the support provided and thought she seemed to love secondary school.

School Career
She is in S1 at a mainstream secondary school. Before that she went to her local primary school.

Academic experiences (including stage in relation to age peers)
Staff (mainstream and learning support)thought she was well below the level of her peers in all subjects, to the extent that they found it difficult to find appropriate work for her to do that was remotely similar to the class work. She had learning support in most mainstream classes. In English she participated in class activities, eg reading parts of a novel; verb tenses and spelling classes (using a computer programme). In science, the class were working on labelling parts of a flower and she received almost constant support from the learning support teacher. The science teacher showed me a science test (TAPS) which has a number of stations and the pupils move around, doing each task under time conditions. Sarah scored 0/15; others in the class had performed badly, but not as badly as she had done. The teacher, however, said she had enjoyed doing it. Rather than embarrass Sarah, she sent her on an errand to the school office, while she gave out the results. In French, she answered questions along with other children, and with a good accent, but the teacher said her written work was very poor.

It was difficult to find out which was Sarah's strongest subject. Learning support staff could not identify any one area, as they considered her poor in all areas; Sarah said she did well in all areas, but liked French and science best. She was so keen on French that she had joined the first year French club. The learning support teacher suggested that I interview the science teacher (as the teacher of a 'successful' subject) as she was more experienced than the French teacher.

Social experiences
Her peers seemed to 'look after' her rather than relate to her on an equal basis. They said they were aware that Sarah had been bullied and had often come to class having been crying. Her peers thought that none of the teachers, except the English teacher had been aware of this. The English teacher said she thought Sarah 'cliped' on other pupils and they had got their own back by calling her names. The other mainstream and learning support teachers and her mother emphasised how happy Sarah was at school. In the maths class, she was chattering away for almost the entire lesson. Eventually a boy in front of her told her to shut up, pointing his pencil at her in a fairly menacing fashion. She was quiet after that.

Her mother said she often came home with the wrong change after buying her lunch and it worried her that she was still unable to do the things that would make her 'fit in with her friends'.

Routines
During one lunchtime each week, she came to the learning support base and worked on the computer. Otherwise, she followed a mainstream timetable and was not extracted from any classes.

Significant people
She did not seem to have any close friends, but was friendly to everyone.

Other things observed during visit
Her report from primary school suggested that she would find secondary school daunting, but secondary school staff thought she had settled in well.

Marie

Description of child and family
Marie is an eleven year old with **severe learning difficulties.** She is a small child with glasses and a shy smile. Poor memory seems to be her major problem and she is able to do only very simple and structured tasks. She cannot read and her recognition of numbers is limited.

Marie is the only child of parents who themselves have learning difficulties and attended a special school. Communication with Marie's parents is difficult, because although her mum can read, this is not easy. They have no phone. The school recently helped Marie's parents to make an application for disability allowance. This has made an enormous difference to their quality of life: the house has been redecorated and Marie has been bought new clothes. An extended family and friends provide support (eg helping with the redecoration).

School Career
She has attended a special school since the age of six. She began at a mainstream primary school and the headteacher expressed the view that she would be better off in a special school, with smaller classes and 'specialist help more suited to her disabilities'. At first, Marie's parents were insistent that she was not to be transferred to a special school. This was based largely on their own negative experiences of attending another school in the city. The psychologist encouraged them to visit this particular school and they were impressed. Marie's father was convinced that she needed more help than she would get in primary school and persuaded her mother of this.

Academic experiences (including stage in relation to age peers)
Marie was at 'working towards level A' in most areas of English and maths, but her reading was considered to be at level A. The class teacher said she found this quite demanding, especially given the range of abilities in the class. The class followed a core curriculum, including language, maths, environmental studies (including science), RE and moral education. They also did swimming, art, PSE, music and computing.

Marie's language work consisted of spelling and reading (using flash cards and a ladybird reading scheme), colour recognition, phonics and letter formation. In maths, she worked on number formation and basic operations of adding and subtracting. A lot of work was done with money (role playing and money recognition exercises) and time telling. Progress was painstakingly slow (she was still working on letter formation and her writing was also very slow, although she seemed to be working constantly) and Marie often seemed to have forgotten what she had just learned. The class teacher said her memory and attention had improved and that she was becoming better at listening and discussing with children and adults, although she still needed to be encouraged to talk.

When the teacher tried to guide Marie's pencil, to assist her in number and letter formation exercises, her arm stiffened and she became even slower. The teacher thought there was some stubbornness on Marie's part when this occurred. She also thought that Marie got easily flustered, especially when something new was introduced and felt it was necessary to do any work with her on a 1-1 basis and in short bursts of activity.

An auxiliary provided support in the classroom, usually directed closely by the class teacher. Staff and parents thought that Marie had become more independent, having accomplished practical skills eg dressing, going messages in the school and helping at home.

Social experiences
Marie appeared to get on well with her classmates, many of whom had severe learning difficulties. There were also children in the class who were older and far more able than her with whom there was little or no interaction. She did not seem to have any special friends. The class teacher commented on how Marie had nothing to say about her birthday and she did not know whether this was because it had not been celebrated or whether Marie had just been unaware of it's significance. Although Marie was said to be well behaved, staff said she could be cheeky when her mother was in school.

Routines
Marie's Record of Needs said that she would benefit from speech therapy (to enhance her expressive and receptive language) and recommended a review. She was reviewed by a speech therapist in 1992, but did not receive therapy, because the therapist thought she was functioning to the best of her ability.

Significant people
She seemed very fond of her class teacher and the headteacher.

Other things observed during visit
There was a very wide range of abilities within the class. There was a little boy with Down's syndrome, who would have taken up all of my time had the teacher not intervened on my behalf. At the other end of the spectrum, in the same class, there was a boy who, by the teacher's account, could just about function in a mainstream school, although he did have significant learning difficulties.

Scott

Description of child and family
Scott is an anxious looking, fair haired child (aged 12) who has **tuberous sclerosis.** This condition is not unlike epilepsy and is controlled with drugs. It is unclear to his teachers whether his constant daydreaming and lack of concentration is caused by his medication, the condition itself, or is connected to more general learning difficulties. not long after I had been introduced to the class as someone who was there to find out about the school and to see how the class worked, he put up his hand and asked me for help. This became a regular feature of my presence in the class.

Scott is an only child and both his parents work. His father is a police detective and his mother has recently taken an office job in the secondary school Chris will transfer to in the summer. Before that she worked in a primary school as a special needs auxiliary for a child with physical difficulties. They bought their present house because they wanted their son to attend the local mainstream primary school.

School Career
He has attended the same mainstream primary school since he was five and at the end of this school year, will transfer to a mainstream secondary school.

Academic experiences (including stage in relation to age peers)
Scott's main problems were said to be in maths, but he seemed to have difficulty in a variety of areas. He said English was his best subject, but pointed out that he was good at music. He was observed in language, maths, art, environmental studies, religious education and physical education.

In maths, he was working on subtracting fractions. He seemed to understand the principle of getting a common denominator, and got one or two correct. If the teacher moved away, he then got stuck at the next one. He would then sit there for up to ten minutes, then put his hand up, or the teacher would return to him.

He was extracted for language along with a group of low ability pupils by the learning support teacher. She said beforehand that he always insisted in sitting beside her, even though she tried to discourage him - he did when I was there.

Social experiences
Scott told me that some of the other children in the class called him 'brain dead'.

During the visit the class were designing kites to attach to a frieze (drawing them first) and he clearly didn't have a clue what to do. He was looking at what everyone else was doing, but not drawing anything himself (I wondered if he was holding back from asking the teacher because she could be heard snapping at people who hadn't drawn their kite big enough or with a clear enough theme). He eventually got something drawn. They then had to make the strings to hang below the kite and he was unable to do this. He stood around for about 5 minutes after he had tried to cut the string, then he asked one of the boys. The problem was that he had been using the wrong scissors (paper cutting ones), but the boy simply cut one piece of string, then walked off, leaving him still struggling with the paper scissors.

In PE, the class had to choose a partner, but Scott did not get one immediately. He eventually joined with another who was 'spare' and who, from the look on his face and the distance he kept from him, did not look happy to be Scott's partner. Scott, on the other hand, appeared quite pleased.

Scott spent most of his free time in the tutorial room, where he and a few other boys took turns at playing the piano. He only went into the playground once during the visit, after the class teacher had gone in and told them to get out (in the interests of

fresh air, I think). There, he tried to join in a game, which is like handball, involving passing a tennis ball and which the girls participated in. He rarely got near the ball, but ran up and down with the rest.

He was a member of the football squad, and attended training but had not ever played in a match. The janitor, who ran the team, told me, 'I've nothing against the boy, but he's just isnae any good'.

Routines
He got two hours of learning support a week (one for maths - in class and one for language - extracted with a group). He took medication to control his seizures ***

Significant people
Scott seemed very much a loner among other children - he was never seen engaging in discussion with them. With the learning support teacher, however, he appeared almost attached to (perhaps simply as someone who would help him). The class teacher said that this was good, as it indicated a willingness on his part to seek help, but the learning support teacher did not think dependency was such a good thing. The headteacher, in conversation, commented on the paradox of learning support for Scott - he needed the help, but reinforced his dependency.

Other things observed during visit
After I had interviewed his mother, he came downstairs and said hello, then asked if he could play his piano (the piano was in the lounge where we were). I said I'd love to hear him, so I got a variety of 'tunes' - part of Fur Elise, the sting - to name just two. He played without music, which his mother said she was trying to discourage from, so that he would become better at reading music, but she was clearly delighted at what he could do. After he'd gone through his repertoire, he played extra pieces with one hand, placing the other nonchalantly in his pocket.

Kirsty

Description of child and family
Kirsty is a talkative 11 year old with **moderate learning difficulties.** She has rosy cheeks, wide brown eyes and a pony tail. She is very friendly and was delighted that an adult was paying her some extra attention, greeting me thus: 'This is the best day of the year now that you've come to see me. When am I going to be interviewed?' She lives with her mother, a single parent, in a village outside a larger industrial town on the west coast of Scotland. Her mother is not working outside the home at the present time.

School career
Kirsty was referred to the psychological services by a consultant paediatrician when she was 3 because of concern about developmental delay and attended an early learning unit. She then started attending a mainstream primary school, initially receiving speech therapy. After primary 1, it was felt that she was making reasonable progress and the referral was cancelled. Her mother said that no name was given to her difficulties and she hoped and was told by professionals that everything would 'fall into place'.

However, it became evident that although Kirsty did not pose major problems for the school, she was making little progress and the teachers, uncertain about how to meet her needs, were leaving her to play by herself if she didn't want to work. Although Kirsty was not unhappy, her mother became aware that other children were teasing her. In addition, her mother took her to school and picked her up every day because she felt that Kirsty did not have a sense of socially appropriate behaviour and was therefore vulnerable to abuse.

At age 9, Kirsty was referred to the psychological services once again and a Record of Needs was opened. It stated that Kirsty had moderate learning difficulties in reading and mathematics. Subsequently, she received additional help from the learning support teacher. After discussions with her mother, a special school placement was suggested. She opted for a school some distance away partly because she had heard favourable reports about it and also because she did not want neighbours to know that her child was no longer attending a mainstream school. The headteacher confirmed that parents preferred their child to travel to special school in a taxi rather than a bus to avoid social stigma. At the time of the research, Kirsty had attended this school for three years.

Academic experiences
The children were doing language and maths work and went up to the teacher's desk with their work one at a time.

Kirsty worked rather slowly on SPMG Stage 2, asking for help at intervals. She broke off to offer various pieces of information about herself such as: 'I've got a boyfriend'. She was doing addition, but clearly found it quite difficult. She seemed confident with units, but had difficulty when tens were introduced.

Language was Oxford Junior Workbook 6. Kirsty's writing was reasonably formed but she had difficulty in reading relatively simple words. She was working on a Code Cracker book and it was evident that she didn't fully understand some of the pictures which gave clues to the sound combinations.

Social experiences
The boys sat individually at desks facing front and the girls sat together around a table and there is some argument about a number of questions such as which swimming pool they went to last week. Hygiene is included in the curriculum. After lunch, pupils were given toothbrushes to clean teeth and vitamin pills.

At lunchtime, Kirsty was relatively isolated from the other children. In the playground, she was keen for me to come and play with her. She spent some time with an older pupil but tended to ignore the younger ones. On the way back to the classroom after lunch there was a row between Kirsty and another pupil because someone has put bits of paper towels in Kirsty's hair.. The teacher eventually calmed both of them down.

Colin

Description of child and family
Colin is a fourteen year old boy with **moderate learning difficulties and behavioural difficulties.** Although recorded for his learning difficulties, staff said they found his behaviour the greatest problem to deal with. He is a good looking boy with a trendy haircut and 'smart' clothes. He is said to be highly embarrassed by his low abilities, especially with reading and it is thought that his behaviour problems stem from attempts to 'cover up' in front of his friends. In first year, he had been given official warnings from guidance staff over alleged bullying incidents; later that year, he told guidance staff that he was the victim of bullying. Colin has been excluded from school on three occasions, for fighting, throwing missiles at the school bus and 'giving cheek to the janitor' and has been put on 'behaviour cards' when in school. In an incident a month before the visit, a neighbour had complained to the school that Colin and others had been rampaging through gardens, throwing snowballs and generally causing havoc. The police were sent to find out why they were not at school - the bus driver had refused to pick them up from his home area, because they had been pelting his bus with snowballs.

Colin's father is a builder and his mother does not work. He has an older and a younger brother and the family lives in a semi-detached house in an urban area. His mother finds him hard to handle, especially, as she said, when he screams at her and says he doesn't want to live with the family. The school staff (mainstream and learning support staff) said they regarded Colin's parents as unsupportive of the school and unwilling to encourage him to modify his behaviour. They, in turn, said they felt unable to do anything and felt they (and Colin) needed more support.

School Career
He is in second year at a mainstream secondary school and before that, attended his local primary school.

Academic experiences (including stage in relation to age peers)
Staff thought his academic progress was marred by his behaviour. They thought he often misbehaved in order to cover up for being unable to cope with his classwork, but this was, in turn, affecting his progress. His S2 report had, according to staff and his mother, been very disappointing.

Social experiences
He seemed, in many ways, like 'one of the boys'; his learning difficulties were not immediately apparent and his peers were more conscious of the times he had got into trouble, than of any problems he had with classwork. The guidance notes indicated tensions between him and other pupils, but this was not obvious during the visit. There was no interaction between him and a child with mild cerebral palsy (whom he was alleged to have bullied in first year). His behaviour seemed to be neither better nor worse than others in the class, but he was given to wandering around the class, appearing busy.

Routines
He received speech therapy in primary school, but his mother asked for this to be discontinued as she felt that Colin had no motivation to correct his sound errors. He had been given 3 review appointments, none of which he attended, so was discharged.

Significant people
Colin's guidance teacher had a substantial involvement with him and attended the Record of Needs review meetings.

Graham

Description of child and family

1. **Graham** is a sixteen year old with **moderate learning difficulties**. According to his Record of Needs, he had speech and language difficulties at an early age. His articulation has improved over the years, but he still has considerable problems with comprehension. One notable feature of this is that he understands things very literally and cannot look beneath the surface of, say, a piece of writing. Graham is a tall, attractive boy, who smiles a lot and who is described by his teachers as 'coothie' (or an old man - he often says 'nae really' or 'actually'). He comes across as a relaxed and willing to chat, especially about football. He talks very slowly and with a pronounced local accent.

Graham's parents are working class people who have lived in the area all of their life. Like Graham, they speak slowly, with a pronounced accent (and sound uncannily like him). They said they were delighted that he has passed exams (which they never thought possible) and think he is much more mature. They want their son to learn the basics in order to lead a normal life as he can, get a job and cope with money and travel. They feel the school staff do everything in their powers to help him achieve this.

School Career

Graham is in S4 in a mainstream secondary school in a rural area. The school has a special needs base, which was formerly part of a special school. In 1993, Graham, along with a number of pupils and special school staff, moved into the mainstream school. This was his second change of school: he began in the local mainstream primary, but moved into a special school, after one year. This was recommended in his record of needs on the grounds that he was not coping with mainstream academically or socially. He preferred the secondary to the primary school because 'it was bigger'. He said he would like a job in a store when he leaves school, but staff were trying to get him to go to college (for an SEN course). His parents thought he might manage to become a postman, which would be a good job for him.

Academic experiences (including stage in relation to age peers)

He went into mainstream classes for English, maths and history, undertaking standard grades in each subject, and spent the remainder of his time in the SEN base. There he joined other pupils with SEN for a variety of activities, including art, environmental studies, social education and leisure activities. History was where Graham found greatest success (and his favourite subject) and English was his weakest area, according to staff, Graham himself and his parents. His English teacher found difficulties with his literal interpretation of everything. His work revealed how everything was answered either literally or ambiguously (eg in response to a question about the book 'to sir with love' he said something about the school making you do subjects you couldn't do, which his teacher could not interpret). In maths, he worked away slowly, but accurately on tasks involving calculations of distance and in history, he listened to a lecture on the first world war and answered a few questions correctly. He was much more animated than his peers, most of whom were stupefied by the end. He received learning support only in history; the learning support teacher merely listened to the mainstream teacher like the rest of us. The English teacher made a point of refusing support (and had told the parents of this).

He had been taking drama (with a view to sitting standard grade), but the head of the SEN unit wrote to parents, suggesting that he drop it, as he had a very low grade and would struggle to get a 6 and had perhaps achieved all he could. His parents agreed. Staff hoped he would get standard grade English and history at low general level and maths at foundation level. He also was taught technical by a retired mainstream teacher, along with two others from the SEN base.

Social experiences
Graham was viewed as 'a bit of a loner' by his teachers and his parents. He said he did not have any special friends at school and got on best with his sister. In classes, he responded to teachers' questions with enthusiasm, but rarely spoke to other pupils. One exception was Graham, whom he sat beside in history. Mainstream teachers remarked on how Graham had greater difficulties than Graham, yet wasn't recorded. Several teachers had commented, verbally and in writing, on the teasing which Graham had experienced from his mainstream peers, but had suggested that his 'easy going manner' saw him through it. Some of this was observed and took the form of engaging him in protracted questioning about football, which he responded to with enthusiasm, while they smirked among themselves. It wasn't clear how aware he was of what was going on or whether indeed he was humouring them.

His parents said they were pleased that he had become sufficiently independent to travel on the train to meet his uncle in the city, but the SEN base staff said he could only find his way around the places he knew well (eg his home town); on a recent trip to France with others from the base, he kept getting lost on the camp site.

Routines
Graham kept his own timetable which divided his time between the base and mainstream. As a sixteen year old, he had become involved with the careers officer.

Significant people
He had no particular friends in school (although he spoke to one other boy in class), but seemed to get on well with everyone, responding in an easy going, friendly manner. His sister was his closest friend outside school, but spent most of his time alone.

Donald

Description of child and family
Donald is a fourteen year old boy with **profound learning difficulties**. He is a tall, fair haired boy, who moves slowly and appears to be in a daze. No diagnosis has ever been made, but at least one doctor has indicated that he has autistic features. As a younger child he was prone to taking fits, which were thought to be either linked with epilepsy or hypoglycaemia. He stares at whoever speaks to him, and often touches them, but rarely smiles and only responds to questions after considerable prompting. He frequently covers his head with his arms and hands and rocks backwards and forwards; staff said this indicates stubbornness on his part, but it is not always obvious what prompts him to behave in this way. Occasionally he throws a tantrum, which may include placing small objects (eg counters or lego bricks) in his mouth and refusing to give them up. Recently he drank turpentine in the technical class, but fortunately came to no harm.

Donald has a younger sister and both parents work. His mother's job as a primary school secretary has, she said, given her a better understanding of the education system. Both parents said they were still trying to come to terms with the personal tragedy of Donald's condition. In the early stages of diagnosis, they had great difficulty in obtaining support from the medical profession, who assured them that Donald was simply a late developer. Donald's parents said they found it difficult to involve him in family life. Recently, after encouraging him to help his father strip wallpaper from a room which was to be redecorated, Donald went on to do the same in his own (newly decorated) bedroom. Donald goes to a family for regular respite care, which he seemed to love, as the family had horses and which his parents viewed as an opportunity to lavish attention on their daughter, whom they felt lost out as a result of the necessary focus on Donald. They thought he was happy at school, on which they placed the utmost importance, but he went through a period when he did not get on with a particular teacher and was unwilling to go to school. They said they were pleased with the progress he has made in school and thought he had acquired some independence and social skills, but felt that the staff underestimated his achievements.

After the interview with his mother, she said that her husband had been very angry and aggressive when Donald was a young child. She felt embarrassed by the way he reacted to the authorities. She said "I'm not saying I've dealt with it any better but I think mums are able to come to terms with it better". In her view, there was not enough support for people in their situation. Even the school did not have a PTA, because the headteacher had said there wouldn't be the interest. She disagreed and said she would have welcomed the advice and support it would bring. Relations between home and school were positive, but there was a note written by the headteacher referring to a telephone conversation with Donald's mother. It followed an episode where his mother had complained that school had not contacted her when he had taken a slight turn. The headteacher had written "mum fine - accepted that we don't panic like primary schools".

School Career
He has attended a special school in an urban/rural area since the age of three. His parents expressed anxiety about what will happen to him beyond school age.

Academic experiences (including stage in relation to age peers)
School staff indicated that they found it very difficult to find tasks where he would achieve some success. They involved him in as many practical activities as possible, because he seemed to manage these well (or at least he responded by doing what he was asked). The teacher and the instructor (the latter was among the last of a dying breed in special schools) were somewhat apologetic for getting him to do things like wash dishes, peel (all) the potatoes for the cookery lesson etc, but they said he

enjoyed doing this. He also participated in selected tasks associated with Scotvec modules in independent travel and personal hygiene, but would not be presented for these, because he was incapable of doing all of the tasks. The independent travel module required the pupils to catch a bus (which would be impossible for him). They also had to pretend to order a taxi, by telephone. The staff were delighted because Donald managed to say his name and address, which they thought was excellent for him, His main strength was said to be cooking, which he did at school and at home. During the visit, the swimming teacher had been particularly pleased that he had managed to change by himself, as well as with his progress in this area. The other activities he was involved in were PE, craft, art, language, computing (touch screen) and every two weeks he went horse riding.

He had to be cajoled constantly in class, otherwise he sat doing nothing and the staff were firm with him when he threw his tantrums. For example when he put a piece of lego in his mouth and clamped his jaws shut, the teacher shouted at him until he opened up.

Social experiences
He had little interaction with other pupils in the class and seemed unaware of their existence. He did, however, tend to touch one of the other boys (on face, hands etc) as the class sat in a group. The staff discouraged this, but did not object if he touched them (affectionate pats), seeing it as possibly good for him (although they said they couldn't tell what was in his mind). The staff told me about a previous period in the school when he did not get on with the teacher, who appeared to get him worked up. He was very unsettled, was frequently upset and would refuse to come to school.

Routines
He got speech therapy once a week. They said they were disappointed that he has never received the physiotherapy or occupational therapy which was stated in his Record of Needs, but did not feel able to challenge this. The Record of Needs was a particular source of frustration for Donald's parents, who regarded it as unhelpful.

Significant people
He appeared to be most affectionate towards the instructor, but had little social contact with other pupils.

Other things observed during visit
The instructor was, the headteacher, one of the last such appointments to be made. She had no qualifications, but was expected to share much more of the teaching than an auxiliary would (eg she would take one group, while the teacher took the other). The planning of lessons and preparation of material were, however, the teacher's bailiwick. In return for taking a more prominent role in the class, the instructor was paid more handsomely than an auxiliary

James

Description of Child and Family
James is an eleven year old with **severe/profound learning difficulties**. He is slightly built boy, with glasses and an almost pained expression on his face. He rarely smiles and appears to be in a constant daydream. When standing, he constantly plays with himself, even, when told to stop this.

He is the only child of a one parent family and is very close to his mother and his grandfather. There are also a number of other relatives within his extended family who have regular contact with him. The psychologist indicated that he thought they tended to baby him and do everything for him and that his mother needed encouragement to allow him to become more independent.

He is prone to secures and is on medication (Ritalin and Tegreto C). He took a massive seizure on the school trip to an outdoor education centre. The school expressed frustration over times when his mother forgot to give him his medication and he's been unwell. The school are primed to give him rectal valium if he has a seizure, bit suggested that James's mother was not taking her share of the responsibility.

James' mother came into the school to be interviewed. I was delighted as the headteacher could not guarantee she would come as he did not have a phone, I couldn't contact her easily. However, her presence caused all sorts of problems. I had asked the office to send for me, but she came alone to James's class instead. When we left together, James insisted on coming with us and cried and would not let go of his mother. Eventually she bargained with him and we were allowed to go, providing we came back to see him in Art. The Art teacher, who has a reputation in the school for getting all children to produce excellent work, could not get James to do very much at all that afternoon, while he was waiting for his mum, and when she appeared, he stopped working completely. The staff were pleased I had seen this side of things' but felt disappointed that this had happened as a whole afternoons work had been disrupted. His mother was doing a college course in nursing, which the staff though was ironic, given her relaxed attitude to his medication.

School Career
He attended a pre-school assessment unit at the age of four, then went to a special school when he was five. He was expected to remain at this school throughout his school career.

Academic experiences (including stage in relation to age peers)
James's class teacher said she found it difficult to meet his needs for two reasons. First he was unpredictable and would sometime surprise her with what he could do, only to completely forget what he had apparently learned. She showed me a piece of work which he had completed unaided one day, but added that often she thought he had retained nothing at all. The second problem for the class teacher was the wide ability range in the class, which made it difficult for her to engage everyone at the same time. His main strength was music (esp singing) and he enjoyed using scissors.

Social experiences
He rarely interacted with other pupils in the class. Having said that, there was not a great deal of interaction in general among the class members. The teacher worked in a great deal on turn-taking, as they were inclined to shout all. At intervals he stood in a corner on his own, usually playing with himself. When the bell rang, he did not respond immediately and often had to be called. One afternoon, the class wen to a park to play and he remained alone. From time to time some young children came to play on the frames and while the other special school children played alongside them (letting them have their turns, etc) he seemed obvious to their presence. At one point

he knocked a toddler over on a moving bridge. The child was OK, but James seemed not to notice this.

Routines
He got speech therapy. Aromatherapy had been planned but had not yet been provided.

Significant People
No-one at school; his mother and grandfather at school. The school and psychologist were aware of the special relationships James had with his grandfather and thought of him as a `bit more sensible' than his mother. They encouraged him to come into the school.

Other things observed during the visit
The psychologist was aware of the business of masturbation and the fact that he had been using sexually explicit language. There was no suspicion of abuse, but there had been some concern about his refusal to move out of his mothers' bed (she was worried about this too).

Adam

Description of child and family
Adam is a fifteen year old with **dyspraxia, motor difficulties and visual impairment.** He had a traumatic birth, in which his mother had her spleen removed and this is thought likely to be the cause of his problems. He is a tall, mature looking boy, who appears sometimes unfriendly and at other times friendly; he seemed on good terms with the learning support staff, his science/guidance teacher and his English teacher, but not with others (especially his maths and computing teachers).

He has an older sister and his parents are separated. His father had recently contacted the school to enquire about Adam's progress, but asked that neither Adam nor his mother be informed of this. The school considered his mother to be very pushy; they welcomed her interest, but felt she went too far on occasions. She considered herself to be something of a fighter. The guidance teacher suggested that she had been very disappointed that his sister (who went to a different mainstream secondary school) had not done as well as she had hoped. He thought this had coloured Adam's mother's attitude to schools generally.

School Career
Adam is in S3 at a mainstream secondary school. He attended the an assessment centre, a mainstream nursery, then a mainstream primary. He began his secondary school career at a different mainstream school which has an ASENT base (his mother thought this would mean more support, but she felt it did not offer this) and a taxi took him from his home area to the school. At the end of S1 he transferred to his present school because, it was said, he was unhappy. His mother thought he was doing much better at this school with friends from his own neighbourhood.

Academic experiences (including stage in relation to age peers)
He was in standard grade classes for English, maths, science and Social and Vocational skills. Learning support was provided in these classes, for other pupils as well as for him. He also attended computing and office and information classes and was part of a tutorial group. He was extracted from PE to do extra work, usually for science.

Adam considered science to be his best subject and the only one he was really interested in. His notes were neat and graph work or catching up was done in the sessions with the learning support teacher. Graphs were often enlarged by LSS to try to overcome his visual difficulties. In English, he was thought to be slow, with poor writing and reluctant to co-operate in discussion; there were other children in his foundation class with learning difficulties. In the English lesson observed, the class were practising using speech marks. The worksheets had been supplied by the PT learning support, who worked with this class and teacher. Adam was given additional reinforcement of the instructions and was provided with a blue acetate sheet, to place over his work. This was thought to make it easier for him to see.

He was considered to be working at foundation level in his standard grade subjects.

Social experiences
Prior to the visit, he appeared to have collected punishment exercises from three class teachers, which he had no intention of doing. These had been for swearing, or refusing to work in class and the teachers seemed reluctant to enforce the punishment; they almost seemed amused to hear of his running total. One of the learning support teachers and his mother remarked on the futility of giving him lines etc, when he had major problems with writing. The majority of mainstream teachers indicated in reports that they found him unco-operative, unable to cope with the work and unwilling to try, although science was an exception. Teachers also said he was good at completing his homework.

He appeared to be a loner, with few friends. There had been some tension between Adam and another boy in his English class who had called him names, but staff thought they had put a stop to this. His peers helped him out, eg in computing, by telling him which keys to press, but there were no 'real' exchanges with him. They appeared discomfited when he declared 'I'm no f****** daein it'. In classes, he usually sat on his own.

Routines
He previously attended speech therapy, but this had been discontinued.

Significant people
He was very close to his sister and considered her to be his closest friend. He said he also loved his pets (2 cats and a dog)

Other things observed during visit
A behaviour contract had been drawn up by Adam's guidance teacher. When he was at his previous secondary school, his mother paid for private tuition in maths.

David

Description of child and family
David is a 15 year old with **specific learning difficulties**. His mathematical skills are hampered by his inability to read. He is a large boy who tends to come across as confident, but he has lacked this in the past and has been somewhat self - conscious of his difficulties. Special school staff thought he was at ease in the special school as the 'big fish', whose abilities exceeded those in his class. His was suspended in 1993 for losing his temper and the need to curb this was a major focus of the discussion at his future needs assessment. It was also said in his school report that he was constantly out to impress, he antagonised and provoked people and was given to fantasising about things he had done.

His mother holds the chair of the school board and is heavily involved in school life. She said she felt let down by the lack of support when David was in primary school. She resented having to pay for tuition from the dyslexia institute. This support had eventually been discontinued, as the institute said they could do no more for him. Staff suggested that his mother was overprotective him, eg not letting him travel or go out on his own, but she felt he could not be trusted and was likely to be 'led astray' if he was allowed to be alone.

School Career
He began his school career in a mainstream primary school, then was placed in a special school in 1989. His parents (especially David's mother) and the headteacher of the primary school thought he would be better off in the special school, but the psychologist argued that he would not mix with his age peers, but this was countered by the headteacher of the primary school who said he had tended to associate with younger children.

Academic experiences (including stage in relation to age peers)
David and his classmates took part in a school leavers' programme, aimed at equipping them for the world of work and included work experience placement. The class completed questionnaires about their strengths and weaknesses. David said he wanted to be a car mechanic, because he would be able to smash things up with a sledgehammer. One of his teachers referred to this as an example of him as a 'motor mouth'. In home economics he made bacon and eggs as part of a Scotvec module on basic cookery. This module was almost complete, after which the class would move on to a module on personal care. His teacher said both courses were so basic that they were not worth the paper they are written on.

Instead of going to enterprise, the class discussed the arrangements for their placements with their guidance teacher. She also took David and another boy out to meet the training manager of a building firm. He had said an interview was unnecessary, but the teacher thought it would bring home the importance of the experience for him (and make him less likely to give cheek or mess around). I sat in on the interview but the teacher did not and David appeared to take it all very seriously - and was quite charming. The other boy seemed to be more of a concern to the manager, because he did not seem to understand what was going on. Other placements included an old folks' home, the school nursery nurse and the bakery of one of the boys' fathers. The guidance teacher said the placements were closely vetted.

Social experiences
In the PSD class, the pupils discussed peer pressure and they were asked to give examples this, which they did (unpleasantness in the playground, some bullying). The guidance teacher said they had been really negative about each other, but had improved greatly. She told David on a few occasions to shut up and to stop butting in. When David piped in with 'I know' the teacher said that he had just revealed his

fault. In the playground, he played football or roved around, appearing very much the 'king pin' he was described as being. The other pupils seemed to look up to him.

Routines
He did not receive any additional therapy and his tuition from the dyslexia institute had been discontinued.

Significant people
He seemed fond of his brother, but in school did not appear to have any close friends.

Peter

Description of child and family
Peter is an eleven year old who has **emotional/behavioural difficulties**. He also has some difficulties with language and maths, but staff said they saw his behaviour as his main area of difficulty. They emphasised that all his work was mood related, he lacked concentration and his mood swings disrupted all those around him. He appears, on first impression, to be an ordinary P7 child, who is a bit unruly. With adults he is charming, often smiling to them, giving compliments or striking up conversations. On occasions, however, his conversations take a macabre turn, with references to death and suicide.

Perhaps the most striking thing about Peter's parents was their disagreement over the existence of any problem. Peter's mother said that Peter rarely misbehaved in front of his father, who works for the region's forestry department. Even confronted with evidence (for example a hole in a wall kicked by Peter) her husband saw him as 'no worse than him as a boy.' Not surprisingly, there was considerable tension within the family. Peter's younger sister, whom he tormented regularly, was the only source of support for his mother. They, like the staff and pupils, tried to ignore his bad behaviour, which seemed to be effective. Peter's mother valued the school's understanding and thought the staff were doing as much as possible for him.

School Career
He is in his final year of a mainstream primary school in a rural area, which he has attended since the age of five. The school has an SEN base, where he spent most of his day. Peter and his mother were concerned about the transfer to secondary school (attached to the primary), where they thought he might be teased more than he had in primary.

Academic experiences (including stage in relation to age peers)
His ability far exceeded that of the other children in the SEN base and he often appeared bored in group activities. He responded to questions quickly, but was frequently reprimanded for shouting out answers. In the SEN base, he worked on maths (addition and subtraction with tens and units and area) or joined in group activities. During the visit, they included story telling, an activity involving street directions and swimming. He went into a P7 class for practical activities, eg project work or environmental studies. The project work involved planning and writing a story and developing a play (within a group) which would later be staged with puppets for the infants. The class were also being taught to wire a bulb and Peter joined them for this. His oral language work was said to be his main strength, particularly in the mainstream class and the teacher said he contributed good ideas to group discussions, but his writing was limited by his grammatical and phonic skills. He was also considered good at sport. Staff said maths was his weakest area and he still needed to use his fingers and his voice to count. Overall, however, it was his inability to concentrate which staff thought limited the quality of his work.

Social experiences
Within the SEN base, he seemed to be very confident and took delight in saying things that shocked or impressed the other children. For example, he brought in some photographs of his father who had been on a stag hunt and he was pictured with his 'trophy' and with other dead animals. In contrast with his confident demeanour in the base, he seemed nervous in the mainstream class. He seemed to want the approval of his mainstream peers. His mainstream class teacher thought his behaviour has improved, but he occasionally had bad days. She felt it was important to reinforce his good behaviour and his contribution of ideas to group work (his main strength) and to ignore misdemeanours. Interestingly, the pupils used a similar strategy: they praised any ideas they thought were good and stopped all conversation and eye contact with him when he 'goes over the top,' as they described it. One example of the kind of

behaviour they ignored was talking about blowing up the classroom when the pupils were wiring a bulb. Peter said he preferred being in mainstream, because he got teased about being in the SEN base. Staff said he lacked judgement in choosing friends and often associated with younger children. During playtimes he was seen either on his own or with infants, who seemed indifferent to his presence.

Routines
Once a week, the speech therapist took a small group within the SEN base and Peter was part of this. The pupils were asked to compare words with similar sounds and took turns at offering examples.

Significant people
He seemed to be a loner who also wanted desperately the approval of his mainstream peers.

Other things observed during visit
I attended Peter's Record of Needs review meeting in which the concerns about his transfer to secondary school were discussed. Peter's mother, but not father, attended the meeting, which began with the head of the SEN base reading out his report. His mother said that she agreed with it but thought the home school book was not a good idea because it drew attention to his bad behaviour. The psychologist recommended the use of spellcheck programmes to build on his language strength and that his bad behaviour should be ignored. The school doctor was invited to comment and said his health was good. They then discussed the transfer, with the secondary learning support co-ordinator trying to reassure his mother that all would be done to ease the stress of this, by ensuring that he would have the opportunity to become familiar with the academy long before the transfer. It was also suggested that his abilities in games would stand him in good stead. The psychologist asked Peter's mother about what he did at home. She said that he liked his motorbike, helping his dad on the farm and watching television and mentioned the trouble he got into for telling lies. The priorities for the immediate future were:

1 Mainstream involvement to provide good role models and prepare for Academy next year
2 Liaise with Academy staff in good time to allow for Peter to become familiar with the Academy routines and establish a timetable that would suit his needs
3 Behaviour - ignore poor behaviour, praise when possible and give responsibility to encourage maturity.

After the meeting, Peter's mother said she did not know what the decision about the home - school book had been. Overall, the meeting seemed to give her opportunities to speak, but she didn't really seem to feel in control of the decisions made.

Craig

Description of child and family
Craig is a thirteen year old with **emotional/behavioural difficulties and learning difficulties**. He is a small boy for his age with very bright eyes and ill-kempt hair. He often wears his favourite tee shirt, despite discouragement from all, because he stretched it, by pulling his knees up to his chest. His emotional/behavioural difficulties were considered by the headteacher to be his greatest problem, especially in view of his background (next para), but his class teacher said she did not find this too much of a problem. He also had a speech impediment and was difficult to understand, and gross and fine motor difficulties.

He has had a difficult life which has only in the last few years become more settled with long term foster parents. His younger brother died in a household fire. The remaining children (three boys, including Craig and an older girl) were taken into a children's home, then they were placed with foster parents. This did not work out and he moved with his sister to his present foster parents. He took a long time to settle down with them and for a long time had a destructive streak (one Sunday morning he turned the gas cooker on). This kind of behaviour had stopped, according to his foster mother, but he still could not be trusted on his own. Some of his behaviour and comments also made her think that he had witnessed violent sex between his natural parents. They are keen to adopt the two children, but their natural mother will not allow this. Part of the motivation for the foster mother is that she grew up in a children's home and wants to give Craig and his sister the opportunities that she was denied, now that her own family have left home and they have sufficient wealth to manage. He goes to a family for respite care and seems to enjoy this.

School Career
Craig and his older sister have attended a special school since 1990. Before that, they went to a different special school, close to their former home.

Academic experiences (including stage in relation to age peers)
In language, he was filling in worksheets with required him to identify words (with pictures to assist him) with 'en' in them eg pen, men, etc. He was clearly having difficulties with this and wandered off after a short time, first to 'help out' at the computer, then to show the teacher his sheet. His teacher said this was typical behaviour, as he was usually 'interested in everything except what he was supposed to be doing'. He worked on the Ginn maths programme. In addition to language and maths he went to technical, swimming, library, art, music, home economics, drama, PE, bible story and singing. He was particularly responsive in music: the staff said he had good rhythm. He also enjoyed PE.

Social experiences
Craig behaved in an erratic fashion, not appearing to concentrate for any length of time. He often shouted to be heard above the others, but the teacher thought his behaviour had improved in the last year. Previously he had thrown his specs in the dining room, kicked the auxiliary on the hand and cleared the teacher's desk. He also had a habit of trying to open car doors but this had stopped. Once a week, the class had a 'fly cup' (elevenses) which was aimed at encouraging them to behave politely, take turns at pouring tea, and exchange some news. During the visit, Mr Blobby biscuits were served, to the great excitement of the pupils.

Routines
Craig received occupational therapy once a week, but not speech therapy, although this was stated on his record. The named person on his record was a social worker.

Significant people

He was said to be close to foster parents and his sister Lisa. When he threw a tantrum his foster father was sent for told him that he would be sent away from them if he behaved like this. This had the desired effect on him.

Other things observed during visit
Craig threw a wobbly in my absence, which staff attributed ironically to a school 'syndrome' - if you ever say anything is going well, it then breaks down. The class teacher had just been saying how reasonable his behaviour had been recently. He had kicked a younger pupil just before they went home, for no apparent reason. He was made to apologise, which he did, but then said something like, 'I wish I'd kicked you harder'.

Laura

Description of child and family
Laura is a fifteen year old, who suffers from **nystagmus, microthalmos and colomboma of the iris and choroid,** resulting in **visual impairment**. She has very little sight in her left eye and none in her right and her condition is characterised by rapid eye movements of both eyes (as if they are rolling around in their sockets. Like Raschida, she moves around the school with confidence, appearing to see more than she actually does. Before anyone else does, she refers to herself as 'wally eyes' and both she and her parents said that cracking jokes about herself made it easier for others to deal with her difficulties. She comes across as a very lively and confident person, but said she does worry from time to time. Her vision deteriorated recently, as she went through puberty and she hid this.

Her family seemed to be very cohesive. Her parents commented on how impressed they were by her positive outlook and cited an example of how she responded during a family outing to a restaurant, where she had poured water from the flower vase onto her food, thinking it was vinegar: she found it funny and encouraged everyone else to laugh with her. They see her strength as coming from her own personality and her security within the family. They had been concerned recently about the excessive homework she was doing, but this had been resolved.

School Career
She is in S3 in a mainstream secondary school in an urban area which has a unit for the visually impaired. Before beginning secondary school, she attended a mainstream primary school (which also has a VI unit) and, in her last year of primary, spent one day a week at a feeder primary for the secondary school.

Academic experiences (including stage in relation to age peers)
Staff considered her to be a good pupil academically, working at credit/general level in all subjects. Laura regarded maths as her strongest subject. Her Standard Grade subjects were English, maths, French, accounting, physics, history and office and information studies and she was expected to do well in all of these areas. She also did media studies, art and personal and social development. Instead of RE, she got mobility training and no longer did PE (spending the two periods in the unit).

She was observed in maths, English, accounting and (briefly) physics. In maths, she was following the mainstream course (Blackie - Maths in Action 3b) and much of the coursework was enlarged. She mostly just got on with the work, and the help from the teacher of the VI appeared merely to ensure she was managing OK, which she was. The main class teacher was a supply teacher. In English, the specialist teacher did not accompany her: there should have been a supply teacher (to cover for some coursework the specialist teacher was involved in) but, being the first period, she had not arrived in school yet! Most of the lesson was spent in the library, where the class were doing research for their discursive essays. Before they went there, however, the teacher gave an example of how to plan a discursive essay, using the environment as the subject. At the library, several of the pupils decided to focus on the same subject. Laura had decided to do hers on equal opportunities, but had changed her mind, because she couldn't find any books on it. Yvonne helped her to look for books, but she also helped another sighted girl. Laura was unable to use the computer to help her search, relying, instead on picking up each book and peering at it. She decided to write her essay on the environment, and put her name down for a couple of books. However, when she got back to the class, the teacher said that if she stuck to her original topic, she could ask another English teacher (who's the equal opportunities person in the school) and she would give her material. The accounting lesson was a traditional 'chalk and talk' episode, in which Laura listened and a specialist teacher of the visually impaired wrote down notes on income statements, depreciation, prepayments and accruals. In physics, I only saw her briefly: the class was working

on circuit boards and Laura had an especially big version, which she seemed to find her way around easily.

Social experiences
Yvonne was obviously the person with whom she shared jokes, and chat, but she appeared very much at ease with others. The other pupils were often on hand to help her, but she preferred them just to leave her and treat her normally. In some of the classes, she sat with Lorraine, another visually impaired child, and was joined by the VI teacher, but she preferred to be with Yvonne. In English, where she sat with four other girls, there was lots of chatting and good humour. I was told about an instance in which another girl was given a punishment exercise for talking to Laura, but Laura insisted that she be given one too.

Routines
She had been receiving mobility training for the past year and was said to be progressing well and gaining confidence outside school. She did not, however, like this and did not want her friends to see her doing this, so it was done away from school. This took the place of RE and she spent the PE time in the unit; beyond that, she followed the mainstream timetable. During the visit, she spent some of her intervals in the unit, often with Raschida, and others with her mainstream friends.

Significant people
She appeared to have many friends, both sighted and visually impaired, including Raschida (the other pupil in the study).

Other things observed during visit
The people of the village where she lives raised money to buy her a close circuit television, which she uses at home. The school said she uses a telescope and an illuminated magnifier in school, but this was not observed during the visit.

Raschida

Description of child and family
Raschida is a seventeen year old who has **retinitis pigmentosa, a congenital visual impairment**. Her vision had deteriorated recently, and it is thought that she will eventually be totally blind. She is an attractive girl, who gives the strong impression that she is seeing more than she does. She moves around the school with confidence; outside school, she is less accomplished at finding her way, according to teachers and Raschida. She has been encouraged to use a long cane, but she does not like it and recently dropped it in a lake. Occasionally she uses the less conspicuous symbol cane outside school. The effect of her impairment is a of tunnel vision (which I was able to experience using special glasses - terrifying). According to Raschida, some of the mainstream staff still persist in seating her at the front of the class, when she would do better to sit at the back.

Raschida has two brothers with retinitis pigmentosa and two sighted siblings. There are 22 people within the extended family with the same condition. Her father (an affluent business man) or older brother has most contact with the school. Her father is pleased she is doing well at school, but both he and his wife are concerned that she has applied to universities away from home. They fear she will be unable to care for herself and would prefer her to attend the local university, like her visually impaired brother, allowing her to live at home.

School Career
She is in S6 in a mainstream secondary school in an urban area, which has a unit for the visually impaired.

Academic experiences (including stage in relation to age peers)
In S5 she obtained highers in English, maths and French and this year she plans to sit higher economics and physics and CSYS maths. She appeared to find maths very easy; she worked through most of the operations in her head, although staff were encouraging her to write these down. Since the deterioration in her vision, she had begun to learn Braille, taught by a teacher of the visually impaired. This, however, had been a difficult process, which Raschida resisted at first, partly through frustration over her level of vision, but also because, as Raschida said, it is 'not unlike learning Russian from scratch.' At the time of the visit, she was using Braille in some parts of the economics course (but was self-conscious about the 'clattering' of the Braille machine); it is not feasible to learn Braille for maths for physics or maths because of the amount of symbols involved. Instead she used mainly taped recorded notes or had a teacher read to her. She was accompanied by a teacher in every lesson.

Social experiences
Raschida appears to have many friends, both sighted and visually impaired. She mentioned having 'white boyfriends' whom her parents did not know about. She also said she did not like people to know about her impairment until she got to know them better.

Routines
During the visit, she appeared to do all the typical S6 pupil activities, including sitting around the common room. Braille was taught within the unit, taking up about an hour each day. She also underwent mobility training for two hours per week. This involved going out of school with a rehabilitation officer and practising using public transport etc, but I did not see this during the visit, as the officer was on holiday.

Significant people
The principal teacher of the VI unit, considered herself to be very close to Raschida, especially during the difficult phase. This occurred during the 'dip' in her vision, when she was faced with the need to learn Braille. Rashida said she went through a

very difficult phase, where she cried a great deal and worried about her future, but was a much happier person now.

Other things observed during visit
The possibility of a guide dog for Raschida was being considered, but she was not keen on this. In any case, the consensus among the professionals seemed to be that there were disadvantages for a teenager in having a dog. She had applied for various University course. When she was sitting her higher prelims, she lost her sight completely and suffered from poor referral procedures. Some, but not all, of her previous sight had returned.

Fiona

Description of child and family
Fiona is fourteen year old girl with **bilateral sensory-neural hearing loss**. Her hearing loss is assessed as between 40 and 80 decibels, which puts her in the category of severe hearing impairment. She can lip read and can hear some sounds at close range. Her speech gives signs of her deafness, but otherwise, she appears just like any other third year secondary pupil. She is tall and slim, has a prominent nose and is passionate about horses. She is very friendly and chatty with adults and pupils, but said she sometimes finds it very hard to understand what the teachers are saying. The headteacher, when I first met him to arrange the visit, said she was recorded but I discovered later (when I had begun shadowing her) that she did not have a Record of Needs. She has a phonic ear, but prefers not to wear it (especially after some children in the primary school referred to her as 'phonic'). At the time of the visit, the it was being repaired.

Her mother and her grandmother are both profoundly deaf and she has an older brother who is partially hearing. He is at University and doing very well, but he did not have an easy time with his peers at school, according to Fiona's mother. Her older sister and her father both have normal hearing. Her mother is unable to use the telephone, but Fiona can, if it is someone she knows and they speak clearly. The school staff forgot to mention to me that Fiona's mum was deaf and when I phoned, I asked to speak to her. Fiona's sister answered and said 'no you can't because she's deaf.' An interview with her mother was possible, however, as she could lipread.

School Career
Fiona is in S2 at a mainstream secondary school. She began attending a Partially Hearing Unit within a primary school when she was 4 years old. At this point her language and communication skills had already been affected by her hearing loss. She was also said to be a very hostile and withdrawn child at this stage. She picked up quickly, however, and at the age of 5 her expressive language was considered to be only 4 months behind that of her peers. She attended her local mainstream primary school from the age of six, then transferred to the mainstream secondary school. Before she transferred, she became very worried that she would receive the same bullying as her brother had done and cried a great deal. Her mother contacted the school and there were no problems. Indeed, all, including Fiona remarked on how happy she was at the academy. She would love to get a job, working with horses and plans, when she leaves school, to do a course in horse management at college.

Academic experiences (including stage in relation to age peers)
Staff considered her to be of average ability and working at the level of her age peers. She still had the significant problems with expressive language which commonly affect deaf people. This is typified by a lack of vocabulary (the teacher of the hearing impaired showed me a list of words she did not know, including lifestyle, environment, conscious, out on strike, prehistoric, most of which we would expect children to know); unfamiliarity with common expressions (eg who do you think you are, he can't look further than his nose); or a lack of understanding of the use of sarcasm or humour as modifiers of meaning (eg you're not talking to your friends now, you know). Deaf people often interpret these literally.

Fiona followed a mainstream timetable, but was extracted from French (not seen as valuable for her) and spent this time with the peripatetic teacher of the hearing impaired, who had worked with her during her time at primary school. She considered her best subject to be information technology. She got on with her classwork and appeared to experience no difficulties hearing the teacher (especially in maths with the booming voice of the mainstream teacher!). Teachers, however, were encouraged to remember the advice given in the pupil support information sheet (which included positioning of Fiona and them, staying still while talking etc). In English she

experienced rather more problems because of her comprehension difficulties. The observed lesson also included a showing of a video and the teacher did not think Fiona would have understood any of it.

Social experiences
Fiona had many friends, all of them with normal hearing. They did not appear to treat her any differently, nor speak to her in any distinctive way. At intervals, she hung around with her friends in the canteen or outside their next classroom and they went home for lunch. She said she had a cousin in school who was deaf, but had no other deaf friends. She knew sign language, having learned one version from her mother and grandmother and parts of another from the peripatetic, but did not see this as something she used in everyday life. Unlike the two children from the school for the deaf, she saw herself as very much part of the hearing (not the deaf) community. She seemed a very happy and self assured girl and quite unlike how she had been described as being in the past.

Routines
The peripatetic teacher of the hearing impaired saw Fiona most days of the week and worked on language, on any classwork she had not completed or any homework she was having difficulties with.

Significant people
She was very close to the peripatetic teacher, who had known her earlier in her school career as an angry person, especially at the point of transfer to secondary. She had introduced Fiona to horse-riding through a friend of hers, so was very special in her eyes. The deaf children's society had provided money for the purchase of riding hat and boots.

Other things observed during visit
Fiona, as a mainstream pupil, was the responsibility of the learning support department staff and not the SEN base staff (which Graham was). There were children with records who were in the same position as Fiona, because they did not spend any time in the base.

Gordon

Description of child and family

Gordon, aged ten, has **severe bilateral sensory-neuro deafness**. He is lively child, with large ears and a toothy grin, and constantly laughing and joking with teachers and pupils. He wears a hearing aid both in and out of school. All of the pupils were encouraged to use their voices as well as sign but Gordon produced a 'clucking' noise (caused by breathing in rather than out at certain moments) and some high pitched sounds. It was impossible to understand him from his voice without a knowledge of signing or the aid of a translator. Staff thought of Gordon as a highly intelligent boy, who communicated well and showed signs of developing a clear voice as he got older.

Gordon has a younger, hearing, sister. His parents were said to augment his education through foreign holidays and other opportunities. His mother said she was pleased with the progress he was making at school, but thought that the amount he would achieve there would be limited. She was particularly concerned that Gordon had begun to mimic (jokingly) some of the children in the school, who had additional physical or learning difficulties.

School Career

He attends a school for the deaf and had been placed in a class with three twelve year old pupils, because of his ability, although he was only ten. This class was part of the 'middle school'. Because his parents were concerned that he would not achieve his potential in this school, plans were being made to transfer the child in the next few years to a grammar school for the deaf in England, which has a strong academic tradition and also uses oralist (lipreading) methods. The staff of the current school were disappointed at the prospect of this happening because they did not want to lose the brighter pupils like Gordon. His own view of his future is that he would not wish to leave his family, but his mother said she was sure she would talk him round.

Academic experiences (including stage in relation to age peers)

As a 'middle school' pupil, Gordon's curriculum subjects were general studies, English, maths, science, social studies, drama, music, home economics, dance, art, PSD, swimming and PE. The school had adopted a philosophy of Total Communication which aims to combine signing with spoken English. The children had already been taught a system of signed speech (Paget Gorman), which conforms to English grammar and syntax and at middle school stage, they were then taught British Sign Language, to help them integrate within the 'deaf world.'

He was said to be doing extremely well in all subjects. English was his main strength (his reading was described as 'astonishing for a pupil of his age' and he was said to have an extensive vocabulary). The only negative comments made about him related to his 'tendency to hog the show, turning group discussion into individual talk' and some immature behaviour. He constantly delighted his form teacher because of, she said, his understanding of language in different contexts, unusual for deaf children. During the visit, she asked the class to make a cross on a piece of paper. Gordon, for fun, put the paper on the floor and walked across it. Both enjoyed the joke enormously, but it was lost on the others. The teacher cited this as an example of his intelligence.

Social experiences

He seemed to get on well with his classmates and with a girl in the class below him, who would be moving into his class next year. Despite being encouraged to sign and speak, even informally, the pupils tended to only use sign when they were interacting. The class went into the attached mainstream secondary school for practical activities, such as art and to use the library, but there was limited contact with mainstream pupils, largely because of communication problems. A small group of primary

mainstream pupils came to the school for PE; during the lesson, there was little communication between Gordon and the other pupils. The mainstream pupils had been selected because the PE teacher said they were not 'high fliers' and 'would appreciate coming here'. Staff said that in 1989, he attended a primary school one day per week, but this was discontinued because they thought the communication difficulties proved stressful for him. It was pointed out that although he looked happy and confident in school, he and other deaf children were terrified outside, where they were unable to function.

Routines
He was assessed regularly by a speech therapist, but did not receive therapy as such and his hearing aid was checked by an audiological scientist.

Significant people
He seemed to get on well with his teacher, both of them enjoying his little jokes. He was very close to his family, especially his little sister (and chose a book for her from the library as well as his own).

Other things observed during visit
The culture of the deaf school was distinctive and would merit an entire study of its own.

Lesley

Description of child and family
Lesley is an attractive ten-year-old girl with wide blue eyes and a rather pale face. She is very thin and often has an anxious expression. Her vocabulary is sophisticated for her age and her articulation is clear. She has a **complex learning disorder and difficulty with social relationships**. Her father is a business man and her mother is employed part-time as a teacher and counsellor. The psychological assessment on Lesley's Record of Needs indicates that her ability is within the normal range but is very difficult to measure because of her changing moods and motivation.

Lesley's early physical development was normal although establishing regular feeding and sleeping patterns was difficult and language was slow to develop. Despite her difficult behaviour as a toddler, her mother was assured by friends that she would grow out of it. When Lesley was 4, a visit to a locum GP led to a referral to a paediatrician who suggested that she might have autistic features.

School career
Lesley had three years of nursery education, first attending a nursery attached to a private school. According to her mother the staff were horrified at her behaviour and left her to run about in a corridor for a year, eventually asking for her to be removed. During the following years at state nursery and primary schools she received additional support and although she made little contact with other children she was tolerated and began to learn to read. When Lesley reached the age of 7, the school suggested that a special school placement would be more appropriate. Lesley's parents were finding her behaviour at home after the birth of her brother particularly difficult to manage and were delighted when they were offered a residential placement at a school for children with pervasive language and communication disorders.

Lesley attends the residential special school but returns home for weekends and holidays. School records indicate that shortly after her arrival, Lesley's behaviour became significantly worse. Autistic features such as stereotyped movements, echolalia and self-harm became much more pronounced and her behaviour was often violent and disruptive. At the time of the research, assessments of the overall success of the placement varied markedly. The view of the psychologist and the headteacher was that although behaviour in school had now improved, the residential placement had had a negative effect on family relationships. Her parents were finding her almost impossible to manage at weekends and in the holidays and a 52 week residential placement in a hospital was being considered. They felt that if more support had been available earlier, this situation might not have arisen. In their view, Lesley's unhappiness at being separated from her family had also damaged her academic progress.

By way of contrast, Lesley's mother was generally happy with the school. She felt that the survival of her family depended on the continuation of the residential placement and was 'terrified' at the prospect that it might be withdrawn. She described vividly the destructive effect on family life of having an autistic child and felt that her son had been especially damaged. She described how he had recently put up a sign on the gate saying 'Autistic child for adoption'. She. felt that the school was very successful in teaching Lesley basic social skills such as table manners. Her only criticism was that its emphasis on rules meant that children were not allowed sufficient self-expression. She also felt that communication with the school had worsened recently and insufficient notice was given of parents' evening and school events.

Lesley's parents were very worried about the longer term future, feeling that the policy of care in the community and the closure of long-term residential institutions

would mean that there would be no post-school provision for their daughter other than at home.

Academic experiences
The emphasis at the school was on encouraging the children to communicate at all times and as soon as a child was observed to 'flap' or lapse into a world of their own, a member of staff would move in to attract their attention. For instance, during hymn singing a small boy was felt to be avoiding eye contact with the teacher. She physically grabbed him, moved his face and said to him: 'Look at me when I tell you to.'

The children went into the hall for song practice for the Christmas show. Lesley sat very quietly in the hall, with a withdrawn expression on her face, making no effort to join in. Later on in the classroom she sang through all the songs quietly to herself.

The teacher asked Lesley to sit at the table with her and do some sums. She got very upset and confused with her maths, (a simple addition) wailing loudly that she did not want to do it and she wanted to listen to a tape. She also repeated several times 'I want my Mum. Where's my Mum? I want to go home'. She was told that she could not have another story until she had done the sum. Louder wails. After a few minutes she was allowed to sit down on her bean bag again. She had not done any sums, but the point had been made that this was what was expected. After this outburst she again sat down very quietly listening to the tape and reading the Story Time comic.

Lesley's reading was regarded as only slightly below what might be expected for her age, although her level of understanding was uncertain. She wanted to read the same stories over and over again in a ritualistic way. She had made little progress in numeracy, apparently seeing little point in it.

Social experiences
There was little evidence during the visit that Lesley was responding at all to the other children, but she did seem better at relating to the adults.

At breaktime, the children were given a drink and Lesley sat on a bean bag sucking quietly. She listened to a tape with head phones on while the teacher listened to Bridget reading and helped John with his sums. Then Lesley was asked to read bit out of her comic. She seemed able to cope with this, although she pronounced some words rather strangely e.g. 'Shingle bells' instead of 'Jingle bells'. Then she sat quietly by herself again and listened to some more taped stories, sometimes repeating parts aloud.

At lunchtime, the children were handed over to the care staff for supervision. It was reported in the staffroom where the staff have their lunch that Lesley had tipped her tray on to the floor and created chaos. It was felt that she did this to gain the attention of the staff. When she started at the school, this had been usual behaviour, but was now less common.

The school has a commitment to integrated education, although it is apparent that this has been happening less over recent months. Part of the programme was to mix with the nearby primary school and Lesley's class was taken to watch the pantomime performed by children at the school. Lesley had become very excited, giggling one minute and spitting the next and repeating 'I don't want to go, I don't want to go' followed by many questions such as 'Where are we going? Is it a film? Will it say The End? Will my Mum be there?

The adults around her (her mother plus the speech therapist and a member of the care staff) were trying to ignore her behaviour and telling her what a nice time she was

going to have. With Lesley, the general pattern seemed to be to ignore her behaviour as long as she was involved quietly in some activity by herself. There was almost a fear that forcing contact would produce some extreme reaction. Contact was made with her only when this was necessary to deal with some aspect of challenging behaviour.

At the primary school, the children were ushered into seats at the back - none of the teachers or the children paid any attention to the visitors. The teacher had bought sweets and handed them out at intervals. Before the performance began, Lesley was again spitting and giggling and repeating questions about how long it's going to be, when it's going to end and so on.The teacher covered her mouth and told her firmly: 'Lesley, you are going to have to stop spitting. You'll have to be quiet.' During the performance, she was generally quiet and joined in the singing, following carefully the words on the sheet.

Overall, the outing was judged a success. Lesley had been threatening some dramatic outburst, but this didn't happen. However, as an example of an integrated activity, it was not clear what was achieved since no contact was made between the mainstream and special school children. The mainstream children appeared to be mildly interested in some of the instances of Lesley's rather eccentric behaviour, but there was not even a word of welcome or goodbye between the teachers. The primary is apparently a mainly middle class, academically oriented primary. one of the teachers was suggested that there might be more realistic opportunities for integration if it had been located near a school with a more mixed population, with, perhaps, a larger population of children with learning difficulties and teachers more sympathetic to integration.

Other things observed during visit
Lesley's room within the school was rather bare, with no pictures on the wall. Apparently before bedtime she frequently pulls everything off the wall and rips the wallpaper. The head of care staff explained that they try to make the residential area as friendly and informal as possible because it is the children's home, but added that because these children are autistic they generally don't miss their parents as much as a 'normal' child would.

Anne

Description of child and family
Anne is an attractive 17 year old with straight brown hair cut in a bob. She has a **pervasive language disorder**, but there is no apparent sign that she has learning difficulties. Records indicate that she suffered form shortage of oxygen at birth. She was a quiet baby and did not babble until she was three, but her other developmental milestones were normal. Anne is generally smiling and often uses a smile to cover up any difficulty she may have in replying to questions. Her speech is fairly indistinct. Her mother and father are both teachers and she has an older brother at University. The family lives in a modern, comfortable bungalow on a quiet village estate.

Her parents, particularly her mother, had invested an enormous amount of energy in securing an accurate assessment of Anne's difficulties and arranging an appropriate education for her. They had found professionals unhelpful and sometimes hostile and the speech therapist to whom Anne was first referred said that no help was possible until she could speak. Her mother replied that this was precisely the nature of Anne's problem and that her other learning difficulties could only be tackled once speech was acquired. Finally, her mother concluded that the only way for Anne to learn to speak was by teaching her to read. Anne's parents were very unwilling for her to be placed in a general special school because they thought that would make it difficult for her to get any specialised tuition. They were delighted when the opportunity of a place at a school for children with language difficulties finally presented itself.

School career
At age 4, Anne had 30 - 40 words but was still reluctant to speak. Her parents realised that she would have to be taught to talk and embarked on an intensive language programme devised by themselves.

Anne attended an early learning unit, then a nursery and started P1 at a mainstream primary at age six. When difficulties emerged, she moved to her mother's own class in another mainstream primary. Gradually it became apparent that Anne was not going to cope with mainstream secondary without extensive support. Although she was very good at activities like skipping, a social gap was widening between herself and other children in the class. At age 12, her cognitive ability was around 8 years but her number work was less good. Around this time, the headteacher of the school she was attending spotted an advertisement for post of headteacher at a newly opened unit for children with speech and language difficulties, and at age 13 Anne gained a place.

Anne's parents' assessment of current school is that it has been successful to some extent, but there have also been some problems, particularly with regard to the collapse of the programme of integration with a mainstream secondary school following the replacement of the popular acting headteacher with a new head. Shortly after the research, complaints by parents led to the resignation of the headteacher.

There was an administrative delay in the opening of a Record of Needs, which was not finally in place until Anne was 16.

Academic experiences
Anne's Future Needs Assessment set out an Individual Educational Programme across all areas. The aim was to provide an intense language environment with integrated speech therapy. The curriculum was balanced towards social awareness and interaction and verbal and non-verbal communication. Her numeracy was poor and required a great deal of development and coin recognition was poor. Anne found adding up shopping difficult and needed support in these situations. Her concept of time and time telling was poor.

The class was making preparations for the residential trip and planning a programme of activities. They had written to the tourist board for details of attractions. Their teacher had placed a great deal of importance on encouraging the pupils to talk to her and to each other and they were clearly fond of her.

There was then some discussion of a video the pupils saw the previous day on landscapes and map-reading. The teacher wanted them to be able to read maps for their residential and Anne has revealed considerable skill in this area, gained by hillwalking and map reading with her parents. She was rather reluctant to contribute her views in class discussion. When the class were working on maps, they were given a list of rivers, towns, lochs to locate on a map of Scotland. They enjoyed searching for these things. Anne tended to work by herself most of the time, directing questions towards the teacher rather than the other pupils.

Anne was also observed doing some Maths. The activity involved playing a game with dice and tiles. The aim was to exchange ten single tiles for one equal to ten. Anne obviously enjoyed the competitive aspect of game, but didn't understand about tens and units. She giggled and covered her face when she made a mistake. She was working through the SMP maths book, adding tens and units. This level would normally be used with a P3 child.

Social experiences...
Anne's Future Needs Assessment indicated that there is a need to 'encourage a positive age-appropriate attitude. Anne has a tendency to immaturity. As she is getting older, and is now a young adult, this is becoming more problematic and will make integration difficult for her. We must discourage immature attitudes, in her approach and in her general demeanour.'

She was eager to relate to peers and staff, but didn't deal well with long-winded conversation and often became confused. She might benefit from a wider peer group of her own age to help her develop and mature. She is very able and skilled at athletic activities. Friendships developed at school have been followed up at home, although these have sometimes been difficult to sustain. She has a range of age appropriate interests, such as music, cycling, cinema, athletics, T.V. and magazines.

Staff tried to encourage the class to take some responsibility for the running of the school. Anne was doing the tuck shop, but had lost track of time and was reminded of this. She left the class in a huge hurry.

Work in class was also designed to boost pupils self-esteem. For instance, Liz told class that they have to find words to describe David. They talked about how he's kind, has a lot of friends etc. Anne didn't quite get the hang of it and said 'He likes watching TV'.

Routines
A home-school diary was sent home every day and her mother wrote about problems with behaviour, in response to which the teacher offered some advice. The teacher pointed out that a problem with diary is that it allows parents and teacher to discuss young person without them being included in discussion at all and therefore denies them adult status. She tries to respect confidence, so that if she is told something in the diary she will not let on that she knows.

University of Stirling
Stirling
FK9 4LA
Scotland, UK

Tel: (01786) 473171
Fax: (01786) 463000